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PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

by

JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen (1775-1817) was born at Steventon, in Hampshire, of which her father was rector. She lived an uneventful life at her birthplace and elsewhere. Of all her novels perhaps the most widely known is "Pride and Prejudice." This was begun in 1796 and in its early form entitled "First Impressions." It was offered to Cadell, the publisher, in 1797 and rejected. In a revised form it was published in 1813. Recently "Pride and Prejudice" has been filmed and dramatised for both stage and radio.

IT is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a large fortune must be in want of a wife. Consequently, as soon as such a man enters a neighbourhood he is considered by the surrounding families as the rightful property of one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady one day. "Have you heard that Netherfield Hall is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"Why, my dear, you must know that Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man with a large fortune from the north of England. His name is Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"A single man with four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls. It is very likely that he will fall in love with one of them; therefore, you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves."

"Indeed, no, you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent in marrying whichever of my girls he chooses; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Mr. Bennet, how can you use your children in such a way? Besides, Jane is our eldest daughter."

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he would not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid had no knowledge of it. Observing his second daughter trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with:

"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are in no way to know what Mr. Bingley will like," said her mother. "Since we are not to visit."

"When is your next ball, Lizzy?" her father asked.

"To-morrow fortnight."

"Ay, so it is," cried her mother "and as Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then you may have the advantage of your friend and introduce Mr. Bingley to her," said Mr. Bennet.

"I am sick of Mr. Bingley," cried his wife.

"I am sorry to hear that. If I had known this morning I would not have called on him."

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished, that of Mrs. Bennet surpassing the rest. But not all that Mrs. Bennet and her daughter could ask on the subject could draw any description of Mr. Bingley from her husband. They were obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour, Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favourable. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, and to crown all, he meant to be at the Assembly with a large party.

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's call. On the evening of the Ball when his party entered the Assembly Room, the anxious young ladies saw that it consisted only of five altogether: Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest and another young man. Mr. Bingley was good-

looking and gentleman-like. His sisters were fine women. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman, but his friend, Mr. Darcy, soon drew the attention of the room by his fine tall person and the report that he had ten thousand a year.

Mr. Bingley soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room, but Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, and declined being introduced to any other lady. His pride made him disliked by all, and amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, who felt a particular resentment because he had slighted one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged to sit down for two dances. Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to overhear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley.

"Come Darcy," said he, "I must have you dance."

"I certainly shall not. Your sisters are engaged and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to stand up with."

"You are too fastidious," cried Mr. Bingley.

"You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room," said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

"Oh, she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld. But there is one of her sisters sitting behind you. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you."

"She is tolerable," said Darcy looking at Elizabeth, "but not handsome enough to tempt me. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me."

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked off and Elizabeth was left with no very cordial feelings towards him.

The rest of the evening passed off very pleasantly for the whole family and they returned in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived. They found Mr. Bennet still up.

"Oh, my dear Mr. Bennet," his wife cried as she entered the room. "We have had a most delightful evening. Jane was so admired and Mr. Bingley danced with her twice. I am quite delighted with him."

She then related, with much bitterness and some exaggeration, the shocking rudeness of Mr. Darcy.

When Jane and Elizabeth were alone together the former expressed to her sister how much she admired Mr. Bingley.

"I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance with him twice. I did not expect such a compliment."

"Did you not? I did for you, but that is the difference between us. Compliments always take you by surprise and me never."

"Dear Lizzy."

"You are a great deal too apt to like everyone. You like the man's sisters, too, do you? Their manners are not equal to his."

"Not at first, but I will be much mistaken if we do not find a very charming neighbour in them."

Elizabeth listened, but was not convinced. Their behaviour at the Assembly had not been calculated to please in general.

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Within a short walk of Longbourn lived a family with whom the Bennets were particularly intimate. Sir William Lucas had been formerly in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune, and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the King during his mayoralty. Lady Lucas was a good, kind woman. They had several children, the eldest of them, a sensible, intelligent young woman, about twenty-seven, was Elizabeth's intimate friend. The morning after the ball the Miss Lucases called at Longbourn to hear and communicate. They talked of Jane's success with Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy's rudeness to Elizabeth, and his general unpleasantness.

"Another time, Lizzy," said her mother, "I would not dance with him."

"I believe, ma'am, that I may safely promise you never to dance with him."

"His pride," said Miss Lucas, "does not offend me so much as pride often does. If I may so express it, he has a right to be proud."

"That is very true," replied Elizabeth, "and I could easily forgive his pride if he had not mortified mine."

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The ladies of Longbourn soon waited on those of Netherfield. The visit was returned in due form. Miss Bennet's pleasing manners grew on the goodwill of Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley. They found the mother insufferable and the younger sisters negligible, but a wish was expressed to the elder sisters to be better acquainted with them. Elizabeth noticed that whenever they met Mr. Bingley that he seemed to admire Jane more and more, and to her it was evident that Jane was in a way to be very much in love with him.

Occupied as she was with observing Mr. Bingley's attentions to her sister, Elizabeth was far from suspecting that she herself was becoming an object of some interest to his friend. Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty, but now that he had made it clear to himself and his friends that she had scarcely a good feature in her face, he began to find that it was rendered uncommonly attractive by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. He began to wish to know more of her.

It was at Sir William Lucas's, where a large assembly was gathered, that she next saw him. He stood near her, overhearing her conversation. She turned to him.

"Do you not think, Mr. Darcy," she said "that I expressed myself uncommonly well just now when I was teasing Colonel Foster to give us a ball at Meryton?"

"With great energy, but it is a subject which always makes a lady energetic."

"You are very severe on us."

"It will be your turn to be teased soon," said Miss Lucas. "Elizabeth, you must play for us."

"Very well, if it must be so."

Her performance was pleasing, but after a song or two she was succeeded eagerly at the instrument by her sister, Mary. The younger sisters, with some of the Lucases and two or three officers joined eagerly in dancing at one end of the room. Mr. Darcy stood watching them in silent indignation at such a mode of passing an evening. He was so engrossed in his speculations that he did not notice Sir William's approach.

"You do not dance?" Sir William asked.

"You saw me dance at Meryton, I believe."

"Yes, indeed. My dear Miss Liza," he said, noticing

Elizabeth. "Why are you not dancing? Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner. You cannot refuse to dance when so much beauty is before you."

"Indeed, sir, I have not the least intention of dancing," said Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy, with grave propriety asked for the honour of her hand, but in vain. Elizabeth was determined, nor did Sir William shake her purpose.

Her resistance didn't injure her in the eyes of Mr. Darcy, and he was thinking of her with some complacency when he was accosted by Miss Bingley.

"You are considering how insupportable it would be to spend many evenings in this manner and such society. I am quite of your opinion."

"Your conjecture is entirely wrong, I assure you. I was meditating on the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow."

Miss Bingley asked who he meant and Darcy replied:

"Miss Elizabeth Bennet."

"Miss Elizabeth Bennet! I am all astonishment. How long pray has she been such a favourite?"

He listened to her with perfect indifference while she chose to entertain him with mocking him on the subject. This eased her mind as to there being any danger of his being attracted to Elizabeth.

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Mr. Bennet's property consisted of an estate of some two thousand a year which was entailed, in default of male heirs, on a distant relation. His wife's fortune could ill supply the deficiency of his. Her father had been an attorney in Meryton and had left her four thousand pounds. She had a sister married to a Mr. Philips who had been a clerk of their father and succeeded him in the business, and a brother settled in London in a respectable line of trade. As Longbourn was only a mile from Meryton the young ladies often walked over to see their Aunt. Catherine and Lydia being particularly frequent in their attentions. There was a Militia regiment stationed in Meryton and the two girls could talk of nothing but officers. One morning, after breakfast, their effusions on the subject

were broken short by the arrival of the footman with a note from Netherfield Hall. It was from Caroline Bingley begging Jane to come and visit her that day. Jane rose at once and asked her father if she could have the carriage, but her mother intervened. Jane must go on horseback, then if it rained, which looked probable, she would be forced to stay the night and see more of Mr. Bingley.

Mrs. Bennet's hopes were answered. Jane had not been gone long before it rained hard. Her mother was delighted. Jane would have to stay. But next morning a servant from Netherfield arrived with a note from Jane. She was in bed with a sore throat, after getting wet through the day before. Elizabeth decided to go and visit her sister at once. As the carriage was not to be had that day she set out on foot.

She arrived at Netherfield with weary ankles, dirty stockings and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise. She was shown into the breakfast parlour where all but Jane were assembled, and where her appearance created a great deal of surprise. Her enquiries about her sister were not very favourably answered. She was feverish and not well enough to leave her room. Elizabeth was glad to be taken up to her. Throughout the day her condition grew worse and the apothecary ordered her to bed. Jane would not hear of his sister leaving her, and so a servant was sent to Longbourn to acquaint the family with her stay and bring back a supply of clothes.

When dinner was over that night Elizabeth returned directly to Jane. Miss Bingley began abusing her as soon as she was out of the room. Her sister joined her and together they scoffed at her appearance when she arrived that day. They next passed to her mother's family, and the fact that they were in trade. When Elizabeth returned they were agreeable to her, but Miss Bingley keenly resented the interest Mr. Darcy took in her and fell to criticising her again as soon as she left the room.

The next day Jane was slightly better, but Elizabeth sent a note asking her mother to come and form her own opinion. Mrs. Bennet arrived with her two younger daughters. Seeing that Jane was not gravely ill, had no wish for her to recover too quickly. This would mean her leaving Netherfield and disarrange all her plans. Mr. Bingley met her in the breakfast

parlour with the hope that she found her daughter no worse than she had expected.

"Indeed, sir, I have," was her answer. "She is a great deal too ill to be removed."

"Removed," cried Mr. Bingley. "It must not be thought of. My sister, I am sure, will not hear of her being removed."

Mrs. Bennet was profuse in her acknowledgments. She then fell into conversation with the rest of the party, exposing herself to their ridicule and Elizabeth to embarrassment by her tasteless indiscretions. At length, satisfied of Mr. Bingley's affection for Jane, she ordered her carriage. Upon this signal, the youngest of her daughters put herself forward. Lydia was a stout, well-grown girl of fifteen with a fine complexion and a good humoured countenance. She was very equal to address Mr. Bingley on the subject of the ball and reminded him of his previous promise on that subject. He expressed his readiness to keep his promise and Mrs. Bennet and her daughters then departed. Elizabeth returned to Jane leaving her own and her mother's behaviour to the remarks of the two ladies.

The day passed much as the day before had done. Jane continued slowly to mend, and on the next day left her bed for two hours after dinner. She was welcomed in the drawing room with many protestations of pleasure, but, in consequence of an agreement between the two sisters, Elizabeth wrote next morning to her mother, to beg that the carriage might be sent for them in the course of the day. Mrs. Bennet sent word that they could not have the carriage before Tuesday.

Against staying any longer Elizabeth was resolved, and she urged Jane to ask Mr. Bingley for the use of his carriage. The master of the house heard with real sorrow that they were to go so soon. To Mr. Darcy it was welcome intelligence. Elizabeth had been at Netherfield long enough. She attracted him more than he liked. Elizabeth took leave of the whole party in the liveliest spirits.

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"I hope my dear," said Mr. Bennet to his wife at breakfast the next morning "that you have ordered a good dinner for to-night, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party."

"What do you mean, my dear?" his wife asked. Mr. Bennet then explained that he had received a letter from Mr. Collins, the cousin on whom his estate was entailed, proposing that he should call on them that day at four o'clock, with a view to settling differences that had long stood between them. He explained that he had, since his being ordained to the priesthood at Easter, been lucky enough to secure the patronage of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose parish and benefice his was. He was, he said, ready to make every possible amends to the Bennets for the unfairness of the entail. Mrs. Bennet was surprised at this news, but remarked that it was civil of him to offer to make amends.

Mr. Collins arrived punctual to his time. He was a tall, heavy-looking young man of five and twenty, and his manners were grave and formal. He had not been long seated before he complimented Mrs. Bennet on having so fine a family of daughters. Next he admired, with over-much enthusiasm, every room and piece of furniture in the house. During dinner he was strong in his praise of Lady Catherine, her consideration and breeding, her charm and generosity. It appeared that she had only one daughter. A sickly girl, who inherited all her property. Elizabeth was struck by his exceptional deference to his patroness.

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, but, having now a good house and a very sufficient income, he intended to marry. This was his reason for the reconciliation with the Longbourn family.

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The next day Lydia decided to walk into Meryton to ask when her friend, Mr. Denny, returned to the regiment. All the other sisters, except Mary, went with her. So did Mr. Collins. As they walked down the street they saw Mr. Denny, the officer Lydia had come to see walking with a young man none of them had seen before. They crossed to speak to them. As they stood talking pleasantly of this and that Mr. Bingley, together with Mr. Darcy came down the street towards them. Both raised their hats to the ladies, then Darcy's eye fell on Mr. Denny's friend, Mr. Wickham. Both changed colour. One looked white, the other red. Wickham at length raised

his hat, a gesture which the latter scarcely deigned to return. Elizabeth was filled with curiosity as to what difference existed between them. They left the gentlemen presently and repaired to the house of their aunt, who asked them all to supper the following night, promising to do her best to secure the fascinating Mr. Wickham for them.

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As they entered the drawing room the next evening the girls had the pleasure of hearing that Mr. Wickham had accepted their uncle's invitation and was even then in the house. While awaiting the arrival of the other gentlemen, Mr. Collins was happily employed in relating to Mrs. Phillips the grandeurs of Rosings, Lady Catherine's place, but with the arrival of the others he seemed to sink into insignificance. Elizabeth thought that Mr. Wickham was infinitely more attractive than she had remembered. He was the happy man on whom every female eye was turned and she was the happy woman by whom he finally seated himself. When the card tables were produced he sat between Lydia and herself. During the course of their subsequent conversations he answered the question that was intriguing her. The difference between himself and Mr. Darcy. He explained that his own father had been the agent of Mr. Darcy's father's estates. The old gentleman was his godfather and had expressed a wish in his will that, as soon as he was ordained, Wickham should be given the best living on his land. Darcy had set aside this wish, presumably out of jealousy over the affection that his father showed for Wickham. Elizabeth was horrified, and surprised at Mr. Bingley for being so intimate with so terrible a man.

As the game of cards broke up Mr. Collins was again heard talking of his patroness, Lady Catherine. Now Wickham had another surprise for Elizabeth. Lady Catherine was the aunt of Mr. Darcy, and it was planned that her only child, her daughter, should marry him. The information caused Elizabeth to smile as she thought of poor Miss Bingley. All the way home she could think of nothing but Mr. Wickham and what he had told her. Her head was quite full of him.

Elizabeth related to Jane next day what had passed

between Mr. Wickham and herself. Jane listened with astonishment and concern.

"It is difficult, indeed," she said. "It is distressing. One does not know what to think."

"I beg your pardon," Elizabeth answered. "One knows exactly what to think."

Then the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Bingley and his sisters with a personal invitation to the long expected ball at Netherfield Hall, which was fixed on the following Tuesday.

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From the day of the invitation to the day of the ball it rained so hard as to prevent the girls from walking to Meryton. Elizabeth consoled herself that she would be able to continue her acquaintance with Mr. Wickham at the ball. Indeed, it was not till she looked round the drawing room at Netherfield for him in vain that the possibility of his not being present occurred to her. Mr. Denny explained to her that Mr. Wickham had gone to London on business, hinting that he wished to avoid Mr. Darcy and so the ball. Elizabeth was furious, and when, after an unfortunate dance with her cousin, Mr. Collins, she found herself dancing with Mr. Darcy, she determined to draw him out on the subject of Mr. Wickham. His expression changed the moment the name was mentioned, but he refused to be drawn. Neither did Jane find out anything from Mr. Bingley, except that they all took Mr. Darcy's part, saying that he had been extremely kind to Mr. Wickham. They were not sure exactly how the difference between them arose. Elizabeth was now more than ever convinced that a great wrong had been done to Mr. Wickham and was thankful that she did not have to speak to Mr. Darcy again that night.

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The next day opened with a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins proposed to Elizabeth. Despite her mother's entreaties she refused him. A day of wrangling left her unchanged, and Mr. Collins in a state of angry pride. The next

day produced no change in her decision or abatement of Mrs. Bennet's ill humour. Mr. Collins was in the same state of angry pride, so after breakfast the girls walked into Meryton to enquire if Mr. Wickham was returned. By good fortune he met them as they entered the town.

On their return to Longbourn a note was delivered to Jane. She read it and then signalled with her eyes to Elizabeth that she wished to see her alone. When they reached their room Jane showed her the letter. It was from Caroline Bingley telling her that the whole family had left for London and that they would probably not return to Netherfield that winter. She implied that her brother would probably stay with them and hinted that it was the possibility of seeing Georgiana Darcy that caused this. Jane was exceedingly distressed by the letter, but Elizabeth treated it with the utmost contempt. It appeared to her merely the suggestion of Caroline Bingley's wishes.

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The Bennets were engaged to dine with the Lucases the next day, and again during the whole of the evening Miss Lucas was so good as to listen to Mr. Collins. Elizabeth took an opportunity for thanking her. *

"It keeps him in a good humour," she said, "and I am more obliged than I can say."

Charlotte assured her friend of her satisfaction in being useful to her. But Charlotte's kindness extended further than Elizabeth had any conception of; its object was nothing else than to secure Mr. Collins's addresses for herself. In this she succeeded admirably, for the next morning, very early, Mr. Collins stole from Longbourn House and hastened to Lucas Lodge. Miss Lucas saw him from an upper window and set out to meet him accidentally in the lane. In as short time as Mr. Collins's long speeches would allow, all was settled happily between them. She asked only that she be allowed to tell Elizabeth herself and made him promise to say nothing on his return to Longbourn.

Early next day, after Mr. Collins's departure she called, and in private conference with Elizabeth related the events of the day before.

"Engaged to Mr. Collins!" Elizabeth cried. "My dear Charlotte, impossible!"

"I see what you are feeling," replied Charlotte. "You must be very surprised, indeed. But I am not romantic, you know. I ask only a comfortable home. And my chances of happiness with him are as fair as most people can boast on entering the married state."

Elizabeth had now recollected herself. "Undoubtedly," she said, and, after an awkward pause, they returned to the rest of the family.

Later that morning Sir William Lucas himself called and unfolded the matter, to an audience not merely wondering but incredulous. After his departure Mrs. Bennet gave rapid vent to her feelings. The estate was as entailed as ever, and now it would go to Charlotte Lucas, and it was all Elizabeth's fault. For her part Elizabeth felt that if Charlotte could marry merely to better her situation in life, thereafter no confidence could subsist between them.

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Finally, a letter arrived for Jane that put an end to their doubts on the subject of Mr. Bingley. His sister conveyed in the first sentence of her letter the assurance of their all being settled in London for the winter. The remainder was occupied with her praises of Miss Darcy. Elizabeth, to whom Jane communicated all this, heard it in indignation.

"The more I see of the world, the more I am dissatisfied with it," she said. "And each day confirms my belief in the inconstancy of the human character."

"Do not distress me by such an idea," Jane answered. "I was mistaken in his affection, and I am not ashamed of having been mistaken. Let me take it in the best light, the light which may be understood."

Elizabeth could not oppose such a wish, and from that time Mr. Bingley's name was scarcely ever mentioned between them.

Mr. Wickham's society was of material service in dispelling the gloom that the late perverse occurrences had thrown on many of the Longbourn family. Now everyone knew what he had privately told Elizabeth of Mr. Darcy. All were happy

that they had disliked him so much before knowing anything of the matter.

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Mrs. Bennet's brother and his wife came, as usual, to spend Christmas at Longbourn. Mr. Gardiner was a sensible, gentlemanlike man. Mrs. Gardiner was several years younger than Mrs. Bennet, an amiable, intelligent, elegant woman. Between her two eldest nieces and herself there subsisted every particular regard. Soon after her arrival she had to listen to Mrs. Bennet's explanation of how two of her daughters had come near to marriage, and, in the end, how it had all come to nothing. Most of this she knew already from Jane and Elizabeth's letters. Later, when she was alone with Elizabeth she spoke more.

"It seems likely to be a desirable match for Jane. I am sorry it went off. Do you think she could be prevailed upon to go back with us? A change of scene might be useful to her."

Jane accepted the invitation with pleasure. Elizabeth was doubtful if the Bingleys would call on her in town, but Jane was not, and wrote to her friend informing her of her forthcoming visit. Before she left Hertfordshire Mrs. Gardiner represented to Elizabeth the imprudence of encouraging the attachment of Mr. Wickham. Elizabeth listened to her and promised she would try to act in the affair as she thought wisest. Her aunt, having some regard for her intelligence, was satisfied with this answer.

Shortly after the departure of Jane and the Gardiners for London, Mr. Collins returned to Hertfordshire. The next Thursday was to be his wedding day, and on the Wednesday before Miss Lucas paid her farewell visit. As she left she turned to Elizabeth:

"Promise me that you will come to Hunsford," she said. "My father and my sister Maria come in March and you will be as welcome as either of them."

Elizabeth could not refuse, though she saw little pleasure in the visit.

The wedding took place, the bride and bridegroom set off from the church door for Kent, and everybody had as much to say or hear on the subject as usual.

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Jane had already written a few lines to her sister to announce her safe arrival and Elizabeth hoped that when she wrote again, it would be in her power to say something of the Bingleys.

Her impatience for the second letter was as well rewarded as impatience usually is. When it came it told her that Jane had spent a week in London without seeing or hearing from Caroline Bingley. However, she would call on Caroline herself the next day.

She wrote again after her visit had been paid, saying that Caroline had been very glad to see her, and asked why she had not let her know that she was coming to town. This confirmed her fear that her letter from Longbourn had never reached Caroline. Of Mr. Bingley, he being constantly occupied with Mr. Darcy, she had seen nothing.

In her next letter Jane told Elizabeth that she had been forced to accept her own assessment of Caroline Bingley's character. It appeared that Caroline had called on Jane and her manner had been so off-hand as to be scarcely civil, that after her departure Jane had decided never to see her again.

This letter gave Elizabeth some pain; but her spirit returned when she considered that Jane would no longer be duped by the sister. All expectations from the brother was now absolutely over.

About this time Mrs. Gardiner wrote asking Elizabeth how things stood with Mr. Wickham. Elizabeth was able to write back to her saying that his partiality for her had subsided. He had transferred his affection to Miss King, who had recently inherited ten thousand pounds from her grandfather. The ease with which she bore all this convinced Elizabeth that she had never really loved him.

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March took Elizabeth to Hunsford. She accompanied Sir William Lucas and his second daughter. They broke their journey by spending a night in London with the Gardiners.

Elizabeth learned from her aunt that, despite the fact that she looked well, Jane had periods of dejection. This saddened her, but did not surprise her. Before she left, however, her

aunt invited her to join her uncle and herself in a tour of pleasure that they were to make that summer. This completely restored Elizabeth's spirits and her acceptance of the invitation was most ready.

Next day they continued their journey to Hunsford. Arrived at the parsonage they found Charlotte and Mr. Collins at the door. Elizabeth noticed that Mr. Collins's manner had not changed with marriage. His formal civility was just what it had been.

About the middle of the next day an invitation arrived from Rosings bidding Mr. Collins and his guests to dinner the following night. Mr. Collins was much gratified by this graciousness on the part of his patroness Lady Catherine, and talked of little else. Elizabeth, for her part, admitted to a curiosity as to how she should find Mr. Darcy's aunt.

She found that Lady Catherine was a tall, large woman, with strongly marked features that might once have been handsome. Her manner was not conciliatory, nor was she rendered formidable by silence, but what she said was filled with authoritative self-importance. Her daughter was a small, sickly-looking girl, not plain, but without distinction.

The entertainment of dining at Rosings was repeated about twice a week and, allowing for the absence of Sir William, who had returned home after a stay of one week, every such entertainment was a counterpart of the first. They dined, played cards and listened to Lady Catherine.

Now Easter was approaching and the week before it brought an addition to the family at Rosings. Mr. Darcy arrived to stay with his aunt and brought with him his cousin, a Colonel Fitzwilliam. On the day of their arrival Mr. Collins called on them to pay his respects. To the surprise of everyone at the parsonage, when Mr. Collins returned the gentlemen were with him.

It was not, however, until Easter Day, nearly a week after the arrival of the gentlemen, that they were invited again to Rosings, for while there were guests in the house Lady Catherine had not so much need of them, and then they were only asked to call in after dinner. They accepted the invitation, of course, and at a proper hour joined Lady Catherine and her party in the drawing room.

Her Ladyship received them civilly, but it was plain that their company was by no means as acceptable as when she could get nobody else. Colonel Fitzwilliam seemed really glad to see them; anything was a welcome relief to him and Mrs. Collins's pretty friend had, moreover, caught his fancy very much. He now seated himself by her and they conversed with so much spirit and flow, as to draw the attention of Lady Catherine herself, as well as of Mr. Darcy. His eyes had been soon and repeatedly turned towards them. When coffee was over Colonel Fitzwilliam reminded Elizabeth of her promise to play for them, and she sat down directly at the instrument. He drew a chair near her. Lady Catherine listened to half a song, and then talked, as before, to her nephew, till the latter walked away from her, and, moving with his usual deliberation of manner towards the pianoforte, stationed himself so as to command a full view of the fair performer's countenance.

Elizabeth was sitting by herself the next morning when she was startled by a ring at the door, the certain signal of a visitor. To her very great surprise Mr. Darcy and Mr. Darcy only came into the room. He stayed close on half an hour, sinking so often into silence that Elizabeth wondered why he had come at all. A few minutes after the return of Charlotte and Maria, without saying much to anybody, he went away.

More than once after that, in her ramble in the park, did Elizabeth meet Mr. Darcy unexpectedly. She felt all the perverseness of the mischance that should bring him where no one else was brought, and to prevent its ever happening again, she took good care to inform him that it was a favourite haunt of hers. How it could occur a second time, was therefore, very odd, yet it did. Even a third.

One day as she walked, re-reading Jane's last letter, she was surprised, not by Mr. Darcy, but by Colonel Fitzwilliam. He accompanied her on her walk. So that he should not notice her intention she turned the conversation to the subject of his cousin, Mr. Darcy.

"I imagine," she said, "that your cousin brought you down here chiefly for the sake of having somebody at his disposal. I wonder he does not marry to secure a lasting convenience of that kind. But perhaps his sister does as well

for the present, and, as she is under his sole care he may do what he chooses with her."

"No," said Colonel Fitzwilliam. "That is an advantage that he must divide with me. I am joined with him in the guardianship of Miss Darcy."

"Are you, indeed? And pray, what sort of guardians do you make? Does your charge give you much trouble? Young ladies of her age are sometimes difficult to manage."

From the way he looked he convinced her that she had, somehow or other, got pretty near the truth.

"Do not be frightened," she said. "I never heard any harm of her. She is a very great favourite of some ladies of my acquaintance. Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley. I think I have heard you say that you know them."

"I know them a little. Their brother is a great friend of Darcy's."

"Oh, yes," said Elizabeth drily. "Mr. Darcy is uncommonly kind to Mr. Bingley and takes a prodigious deal of care of him."

"Care of him! Yes, I really believe Darcy does take care of him. From something he told me on the journey hither I have reason to think Bingley very much indebted to him. But I ought to beg his pardon, for I have no right to suppose that Bingley was the person meant. It is all conjecture."

"What is it you mean?"

After cautioning her not to mention it to anyone, Colonel Fitzwilliam continued, "What he told me was merely this. That he congratulated himself on having lately saved a friend from the inconveniences of a most imprudent marriage. I only suspected it to be Bingley from knowing that they were together the whole of last summer."

This confirmed all Elizabeth's suspicions and, shut in her own room, she thought of what she had heard. That he had been concerned in the measures to separate Mr. Bingley and Jane she had never doubted. But she had always attributed to Miss Bingley the principal design and arrangement of them. She decided Darcy had acted partly from the worst kind of pride and partly from the desire of retaining Mr. Bingley for his sister.

The agitation and tears which the subject occasioned

brought on a headache, and it grew so much more towards evening, that, added to her unwillingness to see Mr. Darcy, she decided not to attend her cousins at Rosings where they were engaged to drink tea.

As she sat by herself that evening, reflecting on the events of the day, the door bell sounded. Her spirits fluttered a little at the idea that it might be Colonial Fitzwilliam, come particularly to ask after her. To her utter amazement Mr. Darcy walked into the room. In a hurried manner he asked after her health. She answered him with a cold civility. He sat down for a few moments, and then, getting up, walked about the room. After a silence of a few moments he spoke to her.

"In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement; and the avowal of all that he felt for her immediately followed. He spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of his heart to be dealt with. He was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than on the subject of pride and his sense of her inferiority.

When she was allowed to speak, Elizabeth declined his offer, adding that the feelings which had so long prevented his acknowledging his regard for her, could have little difficulty now in overcoming this regard for him now. After a pause he turned to her:

"I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little endeavour at civility, I am thus rejected. I might as well enquire why, with so evident a design of offending me, you chose to tell me what you have told me."

"But I have other provocations. You know I have. Do you think that any considerations would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of my beloved sister?"

As she pronounced these words Mr. Darcy changed colour. "Can you deny that you have done it?" she repeated.

"I have no wish of denying it," he answered. "Towards my friend I have been kinder than towards myself."

Elizabeth distained the appearance of noticing this civil reflection.

"But it is not only this," Elizabeth went on. "Your character was unfolded in a recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham."

"You take an eager interest in the gentleman's concerns," said Darcy, with heightened colour and less tranquil tone.

"You have deprived the best years of his life of that independence that was his right. Yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt."

"And this," cried Darcy, "is your opinion of me. You need say no more madam. I perfectly comprehend your feelings, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness."

And with these words he hastily left the room, and Elizabeth heard him the next moment open the front door and quit the house. The tumult in her mind was now painfully great.

The next morning Elizabeth resolved to indulge herself in air and exercise. As she left the garden she was met by Mr. Darcy, holding a letter, which she instinctively took.

"I have been walking here in the hope of meeting you," he said. "Will you do me the honour of reading this letter." With a slight bow he turned and was soon out of sight.

With no expectation of pleasure, but the strongest curiosity, Elizabeth opened the letter. What she read surprised even her expectations.

Mr. Darcy wished to explain the two accusations she had laid to his charge. The first, his having detached Mr. Bingley from her sister, the second, the ruining of the prospects of Mr. Wickham. In the first case he had acted entirely on his friend's behalf, because he believed Jane to be indifferent to Bingley, and also he considered the total want of propriety displayed by her mother and the three younger sisters liable to prove embarrassing to his friend. With respect to the other, and more weighty accusation, that of having injured Mr. Wickham, he gave details which shocked Elizabeth. Wickham had indeed been the son of old Mr. Darcy's agent, and old Mr. Darcy had been fond of him. So fond that he paid for his education, both at school and at Cambridge. Hoping that the

church would be his profession, the old gentleman desired in his will that a valuable family living might be Wickham's as soon as it became vacant. There was also a legacy of a thousand pounds. A year after the death of old Mr. Darcy, Wickham wrote to his son and announced that he had decided against taking orders and decided to study law and hoped that Darcy would see his way to help him. In return for resigning all claim to his further assistance, Wickham received three thousand pounds. Three years later, he wrote to Mr. Darcy saying that he found the study of law unprofitable, and as the family living was now vacant, he hoped that it would be presented to him. The request was refused, and Wickham's revenge took a cruel form. Through the housekeeper of Miss Darcy's establishment in London he got to know Georgiana Darcy herself, and eventually persuaded her to elope. Georgiana's consideration made her confide this to her brother just in time for him to stop this. For the truth of these statements Mr. Darcy referred Elizabeth to Colonel Fitzwilliam, who, as Georgiana's joint guardian, had been involved in the whole unhappy affair. Elizabeth knew Mr. Darcy well enough to be sure that he would not refer her to his cousin if all that he had said was not true. Her surprise and pain was immense, and she flushed with shame when she thought how she had been deceived by Mr. Wickham. She returned home and retired to her room to think. She was now ashamed of the way she had treated Mr. Darcy but, as the two gentlemen left early the next morning, she did not have the embarrassment of meeting him again.

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In the second week in May Elizabeth and Maria returned to Longbourn, collecting Jane in London. Mr. Bennet's carriage met them at the town nearest to their home. Lydia and Catherine were with it, and together they all set out for Longbourn.

They had not been home long before Elizabeth heard that the Militia were to leave Meryton and be encamped in Brighton for the summer. This was welcome news, for it removed the danger of seeing Mr. Wickham.

Lydia and Catherine, together with Mrs. Bennet, were busily engaged in trying to persuade Mr. Bennet to take them all to Brighton for the summer, but with little success.

At the earliest moment Jane was told by Elizabeth of Mr. Darcy's proposal to her and of the terrible manner in which Mr. Wickham had behaved, and whether Jane was more surprised by the former or shocked by the latter would have been hard to say.

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The first week of their return was soon over, the second began. It was the last of the regiment's stay in Meryton, and the young ladies of the neighbourhood were drooping apace. The dejection was almost universal. The elder Miss Bennets alone were still able to eat, drink and sleep and pursue their usual course of employment. But the gloom of Lydia's prospect was shortly cleared. She received an invitation from Mrs. Foster, the wife of the Colonel of the regiment, to accompany her to Brighton. Shortly before the regiment left Mr. Wickham dined with the family. So little disposed was Elizabeth to part from him in good humour that when he asked how she had enjoyed her stay at Hunsford she mentioned that Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam had stayed at Rosings for three weeks. In her answers to his questions she gave him to understand, without actually saying as much, that she knew something of the difference between Mr. Darcy and himself. When the party broke up Lydia returned with Mrs. Foster to Meryton from where they were to set out for Brighton early the next morning.

The time was now drawing near for the tour of the Lakes which Elizabeth was to take with her uncle and aunt, the Gardiners. The anticipation of this gave her great pleasure and, could she have included Jane in her scheme, her happiness would have been perfect. But a fortnight before their tour should have begun, a letter arrived from Mrs. Gardiner which delayed its commencement and curtailed its extent. Mr. Gardiner would be prevented by business from setting out till a fortnight later in July, and as he must be in London again within a month, they were to go no further northward than

Derbyshire. Mrs. Gardiner had spent some years of her life there and longed to renew her acquaintance with it.

Elizabeth was disappointed. She had set her heart on seeing the Lakes, and with the mention of Derbyshire there were many ideas connected. It was impossible for her to see the word without thinking of Pemberly and its owner. It was to be hoped that Mr. Darcy was from home and that they should not meet.

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At the end of four weeks the Gardiners arrived at Longbourn. After staying one night they set out with Elizabeth for the little town of Lambton, the scene of Mrs. Gardiner's former residence. Elizabeth found that Pemberly was situated within five miles of Lambton. In talking over their route Mrs. Gardiner expressed an inclination to see the place again. Her husband expressed his willingness and to Pemberly therefore they were to go. Elizabeth had eased her mind by enquiring of a maid at the Inn at which they broke their journey, whether the owner was down for the summer and learning that he was not. After passing through the park, which was indeed very fine; they arrived at the house, where the housekeeper expressed her willingness to take them over the rooms that were on view to those who chose to inspect them. From her they gathered a very different impression of Mr. Darcy, for she spoke of him in tones of the greatest warmth, saying that she had never had a cross word from him, and that she had known him since he was four. Elizabeth was amazed. That he was not a good-tempered man was her firmest opinion.

Leaving the house they were walking across the lawn towards the river when Mr. Darcy himself appeared. Their eyes instantly met, and after a start of surprise, he advanced towards her, and spoke, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least with perfect civility. They parted, and Elizabeth rejoined her uncle and aunt. Later, while they were walking among the trees, they saw Mr. Darcy approaching them again. He came up to Elizabeth and asked to be presented to her friends. The introduction was immediately made. The conversation soon turned on fishing and she heard Mr. Darcy invite her

uncle, with great civility, to fish at Pemberly as often as he chose. Later, he told Elizabeth that the Bingleys were arriving next day with his sister and asked Elizabeth if he might present her to his sister. She was surprised, but acceded to it.

The very morning of their arrival these visitors came. Miss Darcy and her brother appeared and the introduction took place. Elizabeth had heard that Miss Darcy was proud, but a few moments observation convinced her that she was very shy. Darcy told her that Bingley was coming to wait on her, and scarcely had she time to express her satisfaction when he entered the room. In seeing Bingley her thoughts naturally flew to her sister and she longed to know whether his own thoughts were directed in a like manner.

The visitors stayed half-an-hour, and when they left asked the Gardiners and Elizabeth to dine with them the following day. The invitation was accepted and Elizabeth felt curious as to Miss Bingley's reactions at seeing her in Pemberly.

The engagement passed off well, although there was indeed some bitterness on the part of Miss Bingley. An involuntary glance of Elizabeth's, in the direction of Mr. Darcy, showed her that Miss Bingley's attacks on herself had done her no good in the eyes of Mr. Darcy.

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When they returned to the Inn two letters from Jane awaited Elizabeth. The first told her, to her horror, that Lydia had eloped from Brighton with Mr. Wickham. They had gone to Scotland to be married. Without allowing herself time for consideration Elizabeth opened the second letter. It contained even worse news. They had not gone to Scotland, but had been traced as far as London. Now there were grave doubts as to their being married at all. Elizabeth turned and ran towards the door in search of her uncle. As she reached it she met Mr. Darcy.

"I must find Mr. Gardiner," she cried. "I cannot be delayed."

"In the name of God" he exclaimed. "What is the matter? But let me send a servant to look for him. You are not well enough."

Elizabeth complied and no longer able to control herself, burst into tears and told him the whole story. Darcy was fixed in astonishment.

"When I think," Elizabeth went on, "that I might have prevented this had I but made known some part of what I knew."

"I am grieved, indeed," said Darcy. "But is it absolutely certain?"

"Oh, yes, my father has gone to London and Jane has written to beg my uncle's immediate assistance. We shall be off in half-an-hour."

"I would to heaven that anything I might say or do might offer some consolation for this distress. But I will not torment you with vain wishes." Then with only one serious parting look he went away.

On hearing what Jane's letter contained, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner were deeply affected. Mr. Gardiner readily promised every assistance in his power and, in a shorter time than would have been believed possible, they were all seated in the carriage, and on the road to Longbourn.

The day after their arrival at Longbourn Mr. Gardiner set off for London.

In the course of the next few days Mr. Bennet returned home rendered spiritless by the fruitlessness of his search. Mr. Gardiner was to continue his efforts to trace the pair. Shortly after his return a letter arrived from his brother-in-law saying that the couple had been traced. They were not married, nor did they appear to have had intention of being so. If, however, Mr. Bennet was willing to settle one hundred pounds per year on Lydia for the duration of his life and bequeath her an equal share of the five thousand pounds settled among the children, then the young pair would be married. Mr. Gardiner also stated that Mr. Wickham's prospects were not as bad as had been expected, and that when his debts had been settled, there would still be a little money to settle on Lydia.

This was a source of great relief, but when their excitement had dimmed it was not long before they realised that whatever money Wickham had must have come from their uncle. Mr. Gardiner soon wrote again informing them that Wickham was resigning from the Militia and, through the influence of

some of his former friends, securing a commission in a regiment stationed in the north. The advantages of this were seen by Mr. Bennet and his daughters, but Mrs. Bennet was not so well pleased with it.

The day of Lydia's wedding arrived, and Jane and Elizabeth felt for her, probably more than she felt for herself. Against his will Mr. Bennet had agreed to receive them, and Lydia and her new husband arrived that day. During their stay Lydia let slip in an unguarded moment that Mr. Darcy had been at the wedding. Elizabeth was astonished and on Lydia's refusing to tell her more, wrote to Mrs. Gardiner, from whose house the wedding had taken place.

Her aunt's reply was yet one more surprise for Elizabeth. It appeared that it was not her uncle who had succeeded in tracing the young couple, but Mr. Darcy. Besides which, it was Mr. Darcy who had settled the money and arranged for Wickham's commission. The contents of this letter threw Elizabeth into a flutter of spirits. It was difficult to determine whether pleasure or pain bore the greatest share.

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No sooner had Lydia and her husband left for the north than news of fresh excitement reached Longbourn. Mr. Bingley was expected at Netherfield for the shooting. And what was more, he was expected soon. This threw Mrs. Bennet into a flutter of anxious plans and preparations. Mr. Bingley arrived. Mrs. Bennet heard of it through the assistance of the servants. She began counting the days that must pass before she could invite him to dine. But on the third morning after his arrival, she saw him approaching from her dressing-room window. Mr. Darcy was with him. They stayed for close on an hour, and as they left Mrs. Bennet smilingly turned to Mr. Bingley:

"You are quite a visit in my debt, Mr. Bingley," she said. "I hope you will come and dine with us now that you have returned."

Mr. Bingley looked a little silly at this remark, but a day was fixed, and the gentlemen went away.

The dinner passed off very well, except for a few incautious remarks from Mrs. Bennet which caused Elizabeth to blush and

look at Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bingley, who chose of his own accord to sit next to Jane at table, seemed as fond of her as ever. Elizabeth noticed a slight reserve on the part of Mr. Darcy, and because of her mother's rapacity at cards, she was prevented from talking alone with him.

A few days after this visit Mr. Bingley called again, and alone. His friend had left him that morning for London but was to return in a few days. After this Bingley called almost daily, and his partiality for Jane grew more marked with each visit.

One night, Elizabeth was returning to the drawing-room after writing a letter. On opening the door she found her sister standing by the hearth with Mr. Bingley, as if engaged in earnest conversation. Jane could have no secrets from Elizabeth and instantly embracing her acknowledged that Mr. Bingley had made her the happiest creature in the world.

"'Tis too much," she added. "I do not deserve it. Why is not everybody as happy? I must instantly to my mother."

Mrs. Bennet was delighted with the prospect of her new son-in-law and Mr. Bennet readily gave his consent. The news soon spread round the neighbourhood and the family at Longbourn, from having been considered the most unhappy of families over the affair of Lydia's elopement, were now considered the happiest.

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One morning, about a week after Mr. Bingley's engagement with Jane had been formed, a carriage drew up at the door. The door opened and Lady Catherine de Bourgh stepped out. Their astonishment was beyond their expectation. Lady Catherine entered the room with an air more than usually ungracious, and after engaging in a few pleasantries with Mrs. Bennet, she invited Elizabeth to walk with her in the garden so that she might admire the shrubbery.

They went into the garden and walked in silence until they entered the copse. Then Lady Catherine began in the following manner:

"You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason for my coming hither."

"Indeed, madam, I have not been able to account for the honour of seeing you."

"Miss Bennet," replied her Ladyship, "you ought to know that I am not to be trifled with. A report of the most alarming nature has reached me. I have not only been told that your sister is to form a most advantageous marriage, but that you, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, will, in all likelihood, soon afterwards be united with my nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I would not injure him by supposing the truth of such a report possible, I instantly resolved on visiting you so that I might make my sentiments known to you."

"If you believed is so impossible," said Elizabeth colouring with astonishment, "I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far."

"Tell me once and for all," Lady Catherine cried, "are you engaged to him?"

"I am not."

"And will you promise me not to enter into an engagement of this kind?"

"I will make no promise of that kind."

"Miss Bennet, I am shocked and astonished." Lady Catherine saw, however, that nothing further could be gained by continuing their conversation, and so she turned towards her carriage. As she entered it she spoke again:

"I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet," she said. "I send no compliments to your mother. You deserve no such attention. I am most seriously displeased."

Elizabeth made no answer, and without attempting to persuade her Ladyship to return to the house, walked quietly into it herself.

The discomposure of spirits which this extraordinary visit threw Elizabeth into could not easily be overcome, and her feelings had hardly time to right themselves before Mr. Bingley called again, bringing Mr. Darcy with him. Mr. Bingley, who wanted to be alone with Jane, proposed that Elizabeth and her sister should join Darcy and himself in a walk. This was agreed upon and they all set out, Bingley and Jane loitering behind so that the others might outstrip them. When they were alone Elizabeth turned to Mr. Darcy:

"Mr. Darcy," she said. "I am a creature of great selfish-

ness, and I can no longer help thanking you for your unparalleled kindness to my sister."

"I am exceedingly sorry," he answered in a tone of surprise and emotion, "that you have been informed of what may, in a mistaken light, have given you uneasiness. I did not think Mrs. Gardiner so little to be trusted."

"You must not blame my aunt. Lydia's thoughtlessness first betrayed to me that you had been concerned in the matter and, of course, I could not rest till I knew the particulars."

"If you will thank me," he said "let it be for yourself alone. Your family owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I believe I thought only of you."

Elizabeth was too much embarrassed to say a word. After a short pause her companion added: "You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me at once. My wishes and affections are still the same; but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever."

Elizabeth now forced herself to speak, and immediately, though not very fluently, gave him to understand that her sentiments had undergone so material a change as to make her receive with gratitude and pleasure his present assurances. The happiness which this reply produced was such as he had probably never felt before.

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The consent of Mr. Bennet was applied for, and although he was surprised, thinking Elizabeth had always hated Mr. Darcy, when he was certain that she loved him, he readily gave it. Happy, for all her maternal feelings was the day on which Mrs. Bennet got rid of her two most deserving daughters. With what pride she afterwards visited Mrs. Bingley and talked of Mrs. Darcy may be imagined.

Mr. Bennet missed his second daughter exceedingly and his affection for her drew him oftener from home than anything else could do. He delighted in going to Pemberly. Especially when he was least expected.

As for Wickham and Lydia, their characters suffered no revolution from the marriage of her sisters. Although Darcy

would never receive him at Pemberly, yet for Elizabeth's sake he assisted him further in his profession. Miss Bingley was deeply mortified by Darcy's marriage, but as she thought it advisable to retain the right of visiting Pemberly, she dropped all show of resentment, was almost as attentive to Darcy as heretofore, and paid off every arrear of cruelty to Elizabeth.

Pemberly was now Georgiana's house and the attachment of his sister and his wife was exactly what Darcy had hoped to see.

Lady Catherine was extremely indignant over the marriage and wrote him in language so abusive, especially on the subject of Elizabeth, that for some time all intercourse was at an end. But at length, by Elizabeth's persuasion, he was prevailed upon to overlook the offence and seek a reconciliation.

With the Gardiners they were always on the most intimate terms. Darcy, as well as Elizabeth, really loved; and they were both ever sensible of the warmest gratitude towards the persons who by bringing her into Derbyshire, had been the means of uniting them.

BARCHESTER TOWERS

by

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

Anthony Trollope (1815-82) entered the General Post Office as a clerk in 1834, and proved himself an able public servant. His first novel appeared in 1847. His style has more in common with Jane Austen than that of any other writer. "Barchester Towers" was published in 1857 and is one of the Barchester Series. Recently the book was dramatised for the radio with great success.

WHO was to be the new bishop?

This most important question in the cathedral city of Barchester was hourly asked and in quite different ways hourly answered, that last fortnight of July in 185—.

Old Dr. Grantly died as he had lived, peaceably and slowly. Although he was on his last legs, the ministry also was tottering.

For young Dr. Grantly, choice-apparent of the falling ministry, these were anxious times. The race was so very close, and the stakes so very high. He was over fifty; it was now or never. But as he looked on his father's dying face, he sank humbly to pray for that life, proud, wishful, worldly man though he might be.

As he prayed he was joined by his tender, aged father-in-law, Mr. Harding. Hand in hand, their tears flowing, with more mutual fellowship than ever before, they received the Bishop's blessing; and thus the old Bishop died.

While yet Mr. Harding consoled him, the Archdeacon's mind had travelled to the Prime Minister's closet. With almost indecent haste he had composed a telegram and persuaded his father-in-law to sign and despatch it: when Mr. Harding

suddenly recollected the mundane message that the late painful scene had obliterated from his mind.

"But, Archdeacon," said he turning back, "the ministry are out!"

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The Archdeacon returned sombrely to his parsonage at Plumstead Episcopi.

I cannot agree with those who would censure his ambition, for has not the clergyman the right to entertain the aspirations of a man?

Be that as it may, Dr. Proudie, choice of the "Jupiter," was consecrated Bishop of Barchester.

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The public cannot have forgotten with what pain, at the violent attacks on him in the "Jupiter," and with what conscientiousness, though deterred by friends and lawyers alike, Mr. Harding had resigned from the Wardenship of Hiram's Hospital. The affairs of which institution and of all those concerned in it, had been so widely and enthusiastically discussed, and as abruptly discarded: leaving the recipients of Hiram's charity very much as they were, and only poor sensitive Mr. Harding upset as much by the exaggerated praise of his conscientious resignation, as by the earlier virulent attacks on his alleged rapacity.

Now the old man was settled as quietly, and even more modestly in his meagre lodgings, content nevertheless in his rectorship of the minute St. Cuthberts, and in his precentorship at the Cathedral.

Much of his happiness he found in his music, but even more in the sincere affection of his youngest daughter, Eleanor Bold, lately overwhelmed by her widowhood, but now strengthened in anticipation of her motherhood-to-be.

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Dr. Proudie had bided his time, and his time was now come. With certain aristocratic connections, and with a reputation for

moderate liberalism, he had been found useful by the powers that now were to be. However, his ambitions were not satiated, and he had no intention of remaining all his years at Barchester. Such a resolution, alas, was not likely to make him popular there.

At home, too, the new Bishop had his cares. In spite of success and the promise of more, and of wealth far greater than to which he had been born, he was harassed. In fact he was henpecked.

Authoritative to all, and positively despotic to her husband, Mrs. Proudie was by no means satisfied with home dominion, and indeed did not even abstain from things spiritual. She was a strict observer of Sabbatarian rule. On Sunday no cheering employment of any kind was permitted. In such matters Mrs. Proudie was often guided by the Bishop's chaplain, that eloquent preacher, Mr. Slope.

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Mr. Slope was a clergyman of courage and spirit. He had resolved to be himself in effect Bishop of Barchester. He was quite aware of his influence over the Bishop's lady and of hers over her titular lord. Nevertheless, Mr. Slope believed that if need be, that is Mr. Slope's need, he could inspire courage into the husband and destroy the wife's power. In short, Mr. Slope intended to be supreme at the palace, and thus over the whole diocese.

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Not long after the installation of the new Bishop, Mr. Harding and Archdeacon Grantly called at the palace. They were received by the Bishop, his wife and Mr. Slope. At first the conversation was general; Dr. Grantly, whose wealth would have enabled him to buy every possession of the Proudie family without feeling the loss, bowing politely at Mrs. Proudie's frequent boasts, and Mr. Harding grateful to pass unnoticed. It was Mr. Slope who opened the attack.

"Are the arrangements with reference to Sabbath-day Schools pretty good in your archdeaconry?" he asked.

"Sabbath-day Schools!" exclaimed the Archdeacon.

Mr. Slope merely opened his eyes wider and continued:

"I fear there is a great deal of Sabbath travelling here. Three trains in and three out every Sabbath. Don't you feel, Dr. Grantly, a little energy might diminish the evil?"

"If you can withdraw the passengers, no doubt the company will withdraw the trains," replied the Archdeacon.

"But, surely, Dr. Grantly," began Mrs. Proudie "in our position—"

But Dr. Grantly had turned his back and was talking to the Bishop.

Mr. Proudie, however, still had hold of Mr. Harding, yet even his habitual meekness was stirred, and rising to depart said:

"If you will come to St. Cuthbert's some Sunday, Madame, I will preach you a sermon of the subject."

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"Good heavens!" cried the Archdeacon as they left the palace. "Good heavens!" he repeated three or four times.

"I don't think I shall ever like Mr. Slope," murmured Mr. Harding.

"Like him!" roared the Archdeacon. "Like him!"

"Nor Mrs. Proudie either," Mr. Harding continued.

The Archdeacon hereupon forgot himself.

"The Bishop seems to be a quiet man enough," suggested Mr. Harding.

"Idiot!" shouted Dr. Grantly.

For a while there was silence.

"What a bestial creature!" began the Archdeacon. "Did you ever see an animal less like a gentleman?"

"Who, the Bishop?" asked the other.

"Bishop! No—I'm not talking about the Bishop. How are we to get rid of him?"

"I don't suppose he can do us much harm," replied Mr. Harding, who now realised about whom the Archdeacon was talking. For the Archdeacon had at once realised who was his real adversary, and had every intention of taking up the cudgels. Yet he would fight because he hated the man;

whereas Mr. Slope hated the man because he foresaw the necessity of fighting.

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No one but a preaching clergyman can compel an audience to sit silent and be tormented. Tormented indeed was Mr. Slope's audience next Sunday, but far from silent after the service.

Various, however, if vociferous, were the reactions to Mr. Slope's denunciation as meaningless of the valued cathedral ceremonies, to his insistence that they must not only hear the service but understand it.

Poor Mr. Harding—was he to be forced to abdicate his precentorship, as he had his wardenship? To give up chanting his litany, as he had abandoned his comfortable hospital? Was even his music to be proved a sham?

But Dr. Grantly had no doubts. He knew an insult when he heard one, and he knew the remedy. And he it was who persuaded the Chapter to refuse Mr. Slope permission ever to preach again in the Cathedral.

There were those clergy in the diocese, however, who felt it wise not to ignore the powers that now reigned. There were those pleased to welcome a fillip of excitement, glad of something new, and eager for change for its own sake. After all "one must move with the times." Perhaps the Sunday Schools had been neglected, and the children allowed too much rein?

Thus all Barchester was by the ears.

Dr. and Mrs. Proudie thought it expedient to return to London till the storm should have subsided. Leaving Mr. Slope to flatter the women, ingratiate himself with the clergy and pay prying visits to the poor.

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Among those he decided to flatter was Mr. Harding's daughter, Mrs. Bold and her sister-in-law Miss Bold. No two women could have received his visit with less joy nor less anxiety to conceal their annoyance. Yet such is the power of a soft word in the proper place, of subtle flattery of the recipient's

loved one be it father or child, that Mr. Slope left with his right to visit Mrs. Bold firmly established. Eleanor's good opinion of him was enhanced the very next day on hearing from her father of the possibility of his being reinstated in his beloved hospital.

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Among those with whom Mr. Slope may have hoped to ingratiate himself was Dr. Vesey Stanhope and his family. This Canon had retired to Italy with a sore throat twelve years before this date, and had remained there with his wife, two daughters and son, thus neglecting it is feared his duties in Barchester but making an unique collection of butterflies. The characteristic of this family was heartlessness and indifference, but allied to much good nature. The virtues of the Doctor himself were entirely negative; he was above all things discreet. As for his wife, she had come to consider a state of complete inactivity the only earthly good. Charlotte Stanhope was now 35 years old; whatever her faults, they were not those particular to old young ladies. She was housekeeper and more, for she alone prevented the family falling into utter disrepute and beggary. If she must be condemned for encouraging the follies of her family, she did all in her power to protect them from the inevitable results. Madeline had been a beauty. In youth she had, but just only, retained her reputation. However, an unfortunate marriage had left her a cripple and a mother. The circumstances were obscure; she gave out that she had fallen in ascending a ruin. However, the disaster made her movements so awkward, that she had determined never to stand again. Her face nevertheless retained all its beauty. Ethelbert was handsome and charming. He was accomplished but could accomplish nothing. His only desire was to be a drone, provided sufficient money was forthcoming.

Such was the family recalled so politely but firmly to Barchester by Mr. Slope's decree.

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The Bishop and his wife decided to give a reception to announce their return to Barchester. All Barchester would be there, even the Grantlyites who felt they must respect the Office,

if they could not the Man. Preparations were in the able hands of Mr. Slope, not least among whose worries was the preparation of a suitable sofa for the crippled Signora Madeline Vesey Neroni. This latter lady was last to arrive, and immense indeed was the sensation, as she was carried in by her Italian servants.

Bertie opened the conversation with the bewildered but welcoming Bishop.

"Bishop of Barchester I presume? You've not been here very long, I believe? I suppose you like it on the whole?"

To all this the Bishop returned monosyllabic answers. But at:

"I once thought of being a Bishop myself,"

Dr. Proudie felt his dignity begin to suffer.

But how much more in a few moments his lady!

Ethelbert in an endeavour to improve the strategic position of his sister's sofa, caught Mrs. Proudie's dress in its moving castors—gathers went, stitches cracked, pleats flew open, flounces fell!

"Idiot, Bertie!" said the Signora.

"Idiot!" re-echoed Mrs. Proudie.

In a second Bertie was on his knees to liberate her.

"Unhand me, Sir!" said Mrs. Proudie.

Whereupon the Signora laughed gently. However, on the retirement of the lady, she was soon able to make her peace with the Bishop. With Mr. Slope she was even more successful. Poor Mrs. Proudie became less and less pleased. Mr. Slope would not leave the Signora. Finally, she came personally to fetch him.

"His Lordship is especially desirous of your attendance, Mr. Slope."

"Is she always like this?" murmured the Signora.

"Always, Madam! Always averse to impropriety," snorted Mrs. Proudie.

The Signora could not follow, but her laugh could, revengefully, through the lobby, down the stairs into the hall after Mrs. Proudie.

Subtle was the way Mr. Slope managed to induce Mr. Harding himself to refuse the sinecure of his old hospital. By suggesting conditions which could only insult the old man's self respect, he made the even tempered clergyman angry. Little did Mr. Slope care about, even if he was capable of appreciating the misery he occasioned.

Not content, however, Mr. Slope even managed to persuade Mrs. Bold of his good intentions. What could gentle Mr. Harding argue but that he feared Mr. Slope was not quite gentlemanlike. Nor could his elder daughter, wife of the Archdeacon, comfort him. Stronger her remarks might be than his, but far stronger her fears. Could her sister's partiality for Mr. Slope extend to marriage?

The more he heard the less happy the old man became. Nor did his son-in-law ease him. Far from dismissing his wife's suggestion, he felt he had foreseen it. Far, too, from allowing Mr. Harding to resign his chances of the hospital, he insisted on his fighting for them.

In fact the Archdeacon had new hopes of conquest, for he had all but persuaded that energetic partisan and distinguished scholar, Dr. Arabin, to accept the neighbouring living of St. Ewolds and so enter the arena.

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Mr. Slope, however, was losing no time. Out to Puddingdale he rode to see Mr. Quiverful. Imagine the joy of that poor man with his fourteen children. Let us, therefore, commend him for his enquiry as to whether Mr. Harding had refused the preferment, and forgive him for not asking why too earnestly.

One piece of information he did give Mr. Slope. That the widow Bold possessed £1,200 per annum. Yet food for thought as this must be to him; Mr. Slope's thoughts kept returning to the Signora Neroni. Nevertheless, prudence won the first victory and he determined at any rate to enquire into the matter of the widow's wealth. For was not it his duty as a Christian soldier to arm himself as strongly as he might?

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The subject of the widow's money was also discussed among the Stanhopes.

"You haven't done much to get any orders Bertie," said Charlotte.

"Who on earth in Barchester could want his head done in marble?" replied Bertie as he negligently made a caricature of the Bishop.

"To tell the truth Bertie, you'll never make a penny."

"That's what I often think myself," said he not in the least offended.

"Will you take my advice then? Would you marry a rich wife? The widow Bold for example."

"With a ready made family," exclaimed Bertie.

"That's only one disadvantage."

"And a small one, as the maid servant said."

"Beggars can't be choosers," rejoined Charlotte.

At this moment Madeline was carried in.

"Well, Madeline, I'm going to be married," Bertie welcomed his sister thus.

"There's no other foolish thing left you haven't done."

"Foolish is it? Well you have experience to guide you!"

Then at once Bertie was sorry for his unkindness. With genuine affection he apologised.

"Indeed Bertie has no other way of living," finished Charlotte after explaining the situation.

And so the matter was settled among the Stanhopes.

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"Diddle, diddle, diddle, dum, dum, dum!" sang Eleanor.

"Diddle, diddle, diddle, dum, dum, dum!" continued Miss Bold.

And then Mr. Slope was announced. And he was only too able to make the most of the charming confusion which ensued.

However, he had already realised the necessity of at least not definitely excluding Mr. Harding from the hospital, if he was to win the daughter's good wishes. And already he had experienced a set-back. For Mrs. Proudie, anxious to assure to herself the merit of the patronage, had already promised the hospital to Mrs. Quiverful.

It was all very well for Mr. Slope to suggest to the Bishop the indignity of petticoat government. It was all very well for

him to persuade Eleanor of his good intentions to her father, and this he did do.

"I cannot understand him," said Eleanor to her sister-in-law Mary Bold, after he had left. "Is he good or bad, true or false?"

"Then give him the benefit of the doubt," replied that good-natured lady.

And so it was that Eleanor and Mary seemed to trust Mr. Slope, much to the dismay of Mr. Harding and disgust of Dr. and Mrs. Grantly.

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But what of Mrs. Proudie?

The Bishop could not but take notice of Mr. Slope's suggestion. Late it might be to revolt, but better than never. With Mr. Slope's help what might he not do? Then why, oh why, did he not wait until Mr. Slope was there to help him? Inspired by his own imagined courage the Bishop ascended to his wife's boudoir.

"Ahem—my dear," he began. "If you are not busy?"

"What is it about, Bishop?" asked his lady.

"Well—it was about the Quiverfuls—but I see you are engaged."

"What about the Quiverfuls? It is quite understood that they are to come to the hospital," asserted Mrs. Proudie.

"Well, my dear, there is a difficulty—"

"A difficulty! What difficulty? Has it not been promised?"

"Mr. Slope seemed to think that Mr. Harding—" began the already defeated Bishop.

"Mr. Slope! Are you to allow yourself to be governed by a chaplain?" exclaimed his lady, who had every intention of doing all the governing herself.

And so it was that the Bishop's lady retained her ascendancy, even to the extent of rebuking Mr. Slope himself, not indeed that she descended so far as to mention the subject of the hospital. Had she not sufficient grounds for complaint in his rumoured attachment to the Signora?

Yet all the fight was not yet gone out of the Bishop. Mrs.

Proudie was perhaps too sure. She could not penetrate the Bishop's study at all times; if she had she would have been enraged, if not disconcerted at those unspoken but certain signs of alliance to revolt between her lord and his chaplain.

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Meanwhile the Archdeacon, too, had been busy. Having failed to obtain an interview with the Bishop and declined one with Mr. Slope, he had written a strongly worded but respectful letter to Dr. Proudie stressing his father-in-law's claims to the hospital. Further, with the intention of a council of war with Dr. Arabin, he asked Mr. Harding to spend a few days at Plumstead. And in order to remove his sister-in-law from the danger of further intimacy with Mr. Slope, requested her company too. This invitation she felt bound to accept, stipulating only that she could not put off an engagement for the morrow with the Stanhopes.

Before her arrival even old Dr. Stanhope had been tacitly informed of Bertie's, or rather Charlotte's, intentions. It had therefore been thought sensible to invite Mr. Slope too. This was a surprise only to Eleanor, and an embarrassment to Mr. Slope. For the Signora unwittingly received him with her usual marks of distinction.

Poor Mr. Slope! What would Mrs. Bold think, if he now devoted himself, before her very eyes, to a married woman?

However, Eleanor, unaware of his intentions towards her, was only too glad of Bertie's more amusing company. The hours flew by, for he knew full well how to be amusing and familiar, yet respectful. It was thus a jealous as well as discomfited Mr. Slope who escorted Mrs. Bold home, with the unwelcome assistance of Bertie Stanhope.

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Dr. Arabin was a diffident man; handsome still, if his dark hair was already touched with grey; his career had been supposedly successful; but he was not content. Torn frequently by conflicting dogmas, searching diligently for the truth, he found himself at forty installed in the relatively poor living of St. Ewolds, conscious that his brilliant scholastic career had made him ambitious of a more brilliant lot.

It was with tranquillity, therefore, rather than spirit that he allowed the Archdeacon, accompanied by his wife with her sister and father, to conduct him over the new parsonage. While Dr. Arabin did not apparently take much notice of Eleanor, he was not unaware that he was in the company of a pretty woman.

"You will have a beautiful prospect," said Eleanor, standing at the lattice of a little room upstairs.

"Yes," Dr. Arabin rejoined. "A beautifully complete view of my adversaries."

"You clergymen are always thinking of fighting one another," said Eleanor.

"Are we not a church militant?"

"Yes, but to fight with each other, and about trifles."

"Wars about trifles are always bitter, especially between neighbours." Then for a while he was silent, then as if talking to himself continued: "Peace on earth and goodwill among men, are like Heaven, promises for the future."

But at this point they were interrupted by the others, and the conversation turned to dilapidations and alterations of the building.

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Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne was a gentleman, interested in genealogy, he was thoroughly aware of his family's antiquity. As was, too, his sister, with whom he lived. She was indeed a caricature of her brother, hardly aware that the present was no longer the past. Quaint and old fashioned might they be, as was indeed their ancestral manor house, prejudiced too, but nevertheless sincerely upholding and carrying out those standards and values in which they believed.

Much to Dr. Grantly's disgust Dr. Arabin confessed himself alarmed to preach before this aristocratic old couple and his other parishioners. However, everyone was satisfied and all professed themselves delighted with his conduct of the service—not least the Thornes themselves, to whose house Dr. Arabin and the party from Plumstead had been invited to luncheon, where nothing could have exceeded the kindness of Miss Thorne to Dr. Arabin, and the fuss she made over the young widowed mother. She insisted on the benefits of the

receipts she had been taught and perhaps suffered from as a child, but with such good nature that not even Eleanor could resent her. Meanwhile, the Archdeacon was immersed in a purely agricultural conversation with Squire Thorne. And thus after the afternoon service they all went their separate ways, conscious of having spent a particularly agreeable day. Nor was it the only one, for what with exchanges of hospitality with the Thornes and a dinner party at the Stanhopes, life seemed especially pleasant to them all.

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While amidst these pleasures the Archdeacon and Dr. Arabin were plotting on behalf of the reluctant Mr. Harding, an unexpected ally was working for the ex-warden at the palace. Mr. Slope had by no means accepted defeat at the hands of Mrs. Proudie.

His first step was a visit to Mr. Quiverful. He began by elaborating the difficulties of the situation.

"The truth is," he said "Mr. Harding hardly knows his own mind."

"But my wife received a distinct promise from Mrs. Proudie herself," cried the father of fourteen children, who sees the bread dashed from their mouths.

"Mrs. Proudie!" and Mr. Slope smiled. "I fear that the patronage is not in her hands. Besides did you not yourself declare that your acceptance was conditional on Mr. Harding's refusal?"

"Yes, I did say that certainly," said Mr. Quiverful, now once more conscious that he was a clergyman.

"After all this wardenship is not the only thing in the Bishop's gift," suggested Mr. Slope.

And Mr. Quiverful had perforce to be content.

But not so Mrs. Quiverful. If her husband would not fight, she would. Strengthened by the pressing wants of her large family, she felt she could face legions of episcopal forces. She, poor lady, had no shame left, no '*mauvaise honte*.' If she were to be ill-used, all the world should know of it.

Nevertheless, when she arrived at the palace her courage ebbed at the sight of the liveried footman. But giving him her

card and her very last half-crown eventually found herself face to face with Mrs. Proudie.

"Well, Mrs. Quiverful, when are you to move to the hospital?" began that lady.

"I fear we are not to—" began Mrs. Quiverful.

At once Mrs. Proudie was all attention, and blacker grew her brow as the tale unfolded. At last starting from her chair, and begging the other to remain, she marched out of the room.

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Without knocking she marched straight to her lord's study, and there found herself face to face with her enemy, which both she and he knew him now to be.

"What is this, Bishop, about Mr. Quiverful?"

"Mr. Quiverful has abandoned his claim," put in Mr. Slope.

"Mr. Quiverful has abandoned nothing," retorted Mrs. Proudie.

"Perhaps I ought not to interfere—" Mr. Slope was beginning.

"You certainly ought not," the lady interrupted.

"But," continued Mr. Slope unconcernedly, "I felt it my duty to advise the Bishop not to slight Mr. Harding's claim."

"Mr. Harding should have known his own mind."

"Public opinion—"

"And what is to become of the Sabbath School? You have a very easy conscience in such matters Mr. Slope. And who commissioned you to manage this affair? Who sent you back to Mr. Quiverful?" demanded the irate lady.

But now she had played into her adversary's hands.

"Mrs. Proudie," said Mr. Slope. "My duty is to his Lordship. If I have his approval, I want none other."

"Mr. Slope," Mrs. Proudie replied, her rage mastered, her voice low and ominous. "I will trouble you to leave the apartment."

But he did not.

"My Lord," cried his lady, "is Mr. Slope to leave the room or am I?"

Foolish woman! She should never have alluded even to the

possibility of her leaving the room herself. Finally his Lordship spoke for the first time.

"Why, my dear, Mr. Slope and I are very busy!"

Mr. Slope's look of triumph was one never to be forgiven. And even the Bishop was rejoiced. However, Mrs. Proudie was not defeated or at least did not admit herself so.

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Mr. Slope's first action was to write a letter to Eleanor to inform her that Mr. Quiverful had resigned his pretension. His second action was to visit the Signora.

"Ah, my friend, I was this moment writing to you."

"Pray let me keep your note."

"Gracious me, Mr. Slope, this trash is only fit for the fire."

"If perish they must, let it be worthily on a pyre, like Dido."

"Dido! I find her most absurd; in trying to keep both, she lost both her land and her lover. Never, Mr. Slope, mix love and business." The Signora paused as he blushed. "Tell me, which would you choose—love or money?"

"Love," he replied. "For this world's wealth will make no one happy."

"And happiness?" the Signora asked.

"We must seek happiness only in Heaven," he replied.

"Pshaw!" she exclaimed. "I will think no preaching sincere that is not recommended by the practice of the preacher. For does not every clergyman wish to be a bishop?"

"Your wit delights in such arguments, but your heart—"

"My heart! I fear you mistake my composition if you imagine there is such a thing about me!"

"Ah! your love would satisfy the dream of a monarch."

"Or an Archbishop," she cruelly suggested.

"Oh, Madeline," Mr. Slope pleaded.

"My name is Madeline, Mr. Slope, but none but my family call me so. But look into my face." The Signora paused while her victim gave her a languishing look. "Have I to understand that you say you love me?"

He had not but he assured her it was so.

"And now answer me another question," she went on.

"When are you to be married to my dear friend Eleanor Bold?"

"How can you accuse me of such dissimulation," he complained.

"But are you not to marry her? Do you not worship her? I should have thought her the perfect type of English beauty?"

"How can you be so cruel," Mr. Slope cried. "Is not all my love your own?"

"In my condition?"

"Can I not sympathise?"

"Or pity! I spurn pity," the Signora exclaimed.

"I will only love you," he asserted.

"And if Signor Neroni were to come to Barchester?"

"How can you retain one spark of affection for that wretch?"

"That wretch! Should not a wife love her husband? Or if she cease to love, can she then cease to be true? Will you sacrifice the world for love? Come, I have divorced him in my heart, which to me is as good as if aged Lords had gloated over his licentious life. You say you would marry me if I were free. I am free! Will you call me Mrs. Slope before Bishop, Dean and Chapter? You won't? Then pray tell what part of the world is it that you sacrifice for my charms?"

But he was silent. And the Signora having exhausted her energies made her peace with him.

"Forgive my home truths and let us be friends. Pray, too, look at my note. It is about the Sabbath School and the children."

Poor Mr. Slope was nevertheless uneasy in his conscience.

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It was the Archdeacon himself who was the unhappy bearer of Mr. Slope's letter to Eleanor. And bitter his feelings were! For though he did love his sister-in-law, it was not in him to love her should she openly side with his enemies. Her father, however, was of weaker calibre. He knew that however much he might regret such a marriage, he would in fact condone it. It occurred to neither of them that no vestige of an idea of such a marriage had or could ever be considered by Eleanor.

Dinner at Plumstead was an awkward silent meal. Suspicion and suspicions of suspicion reigned. Even when the men were alone, there was still silence.

"You got a note just before dinner," began Mrs. Grantly to her sister when they were alone. "Was it not from Mr. Slope?"

Once more Eleanor only bowed her head in affirmation.

"I hope he is not a regular correspondent of yours. You know how distasteful a person he is to Papa, to the Archdeacon and all your friends." Mrs. Grantly paused. "Could you not tell me what the letter is about?"

"I fear I cannot tell you. It was on confidential business regarding a third person."

"Is it not rather singular for a young lady in your position to receive a letter, the contents of which she is ashamed—?"

"I am not ashamed, only I do not wish to be cross-examined."

"But is it proper—"

"Were it ever so improper, how can I help his writing to me?"

"But we would all like you to drop Mr. Slope."

"To be as illiberal as yourselves. I hate a religion which teaches one to be so one-sided in one's charity."

"Then Eleanor, it is my duty to tell you that the Archdeacon thinks it disgraceful, and that he cannot allow it in his house."

"You may tell the Archdeacon that I shall receive what letters I please. As for the word disgraceful, if Dr. Grantly has used it, he has been unmanly and inhospitable. You may ask Papa to come to my room and to him and to him alone will I show the letter."

And so Eleanor left the room, and left her suspicions more firmly rooted in her sister's heart. Nor were her father's fears much assuaged by the letter, for there were passages of unseemly tenderness which Eleanor, in her innocence, had ignored. However, their parting was friendly. Not so her parting with the Archdeacon. He chose to advise her, even after she had made it clear that she needed no advice. He chose to threaten that her conduct would end in her separating herself from her family. He even mentioned that Dr. Arabin's advice had been

asked. He even went so far as to suggest that she might marry Mr. Slope.

Small wonder that Eleanor departed the very next morning, to her own and her relations' relief.

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By some strange trick of female reasoning Eleanor attributed to Dr. Arabin the blame for the disgusting suspicion about her feelings towards Mr. Slope. Against him perhaps her wrath was greatest. She was not, however, to leave Plumstead without seeing him again.

"I am sorry to hear you are leaving us," he said, as she sat waiting to depart. "Pleasant days must come to an end. It is a pity so few are pleasant—"

"It is a pity men do so much to destroy pleasantness."

And there then was silence.

"It is a pity there should be so little charity abroad," continued Eleanor.

"Charity should begin at home," Dr. Arabin said. "But I must not preach again."

"You should practise as well as preach."

"In what is my special deficiency?" Dr. Arabin asked.

"Did you not speak calumny of me to Dr. Grantly? He has told me what you said."

"Calumny! Certainly not! Dr. Grantly asked my advice and I felt bound to give it."

"Dr. Grantly has been most impertinent," cried Eleanor, and proceeded at length to complain of the injustice and officious treatment she had suffered. Yet as she spoke, by some subconscious means, Dr. Arabin felt more and more surely that she did not love Mr. Slope. So when she finally left, he followed her into the garden.

"I hope we are not to part as enemies?" he requested.

"There shall be no enmity on my part, but people cannot make friends of those they despise."

"Am I despised then?"

"I must have been," exclaimed Eleanor, "and I had believed you esteemed me."

"Esteem you!" he now cried. "I would use stronger words than that. How could I insult you? How injure you?"

How speak calumny of you? I wish it were my privilege to shield you from insult, injury and calumny! Oh, father of Heaven! How good for us it would be, if thou couldst vouchsafe us a certain rule!"

"And have we no certain rule?" said Eleanor softly.

"Yes, yes, surely. 'Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil.' But what is temptation, what evil?"

Poor Dr. Arabin. It would not come out of him, that true love of his. Yet Eleanor understood. She knew that this scholar, this accomplished orator, was striving vainly to profess his love for her. Yet pleased as she was, happy as she was, she could not yet even ask herself whether she might ultimately consider this love.

"Answer me this," he said suddenly. "You do not love Mr. Slope?"

Foolish Dr. Arabin, to ruin at one blow what he had so nearly accomplished.

"I shall answer no such question!" exclaimed Eleanor and walked proudly away.

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Sad news reached the Plumstead party on arrival in Barchester. The beloved Dean was on the point of death. Mr. Harding and the Archdeacon went at once to his residence, where a large gathering of clergymen had assembled.

"The fit was very violent," said one.

"I suppose the government will appoint?" asked another.

"While there is yet hope," rebuked a third.

"I know of no man who has better interest than Mr. Slope."

"The Bishop would do anything for him."

"So would Mrs. Proudie!"

"I should consider such an appointment most unlikely, but at present I am thinking of our poor friend."

"Indeed, yes. Poor Dr. Trefoil."

"They say it is cut down to £1,200 a year?"

"Pooh! Nonsense! £1,500 at least."

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Not least interested in this sad event was Mr. Slope. On the morning after his celebrated victory over Mrs. Proudie he entered the Bishop's study to find him breakfasting alone.

"My Lord, the Dean is dead!" he exclaimed. "Or at any rate now dying."

But it was a different Bishop from the evening before. Attenuated, worn, he looked years older. But it would not be proper to enquire what had happened in the privacy of his bed chamber, between him and his lady.

"It will naturally be of much moment to your Lordship as to who is to succeed him," continued Mr. Slope. "Only think if Dr. Grantly were to get it."

The Bishop was non-committal.

"If I might venture to submit an idea," Mr. Slope commenced, and went on at length extolling his own virtues, ending by a direct request for his own installation.

"You!" exclaimed the Bishop in a tone that even Mr. Slope could not have thought complimentary. But the latter was not abashed. He passed to practical advantages—his loyalty to the Bishop, his popularity with the press.

Mr. Slope continued to talk, while the Bishop's mind worried the question.

"If you were to mention it to the Archbishop," Mr. Slope suggested.

And the Bishop promised, but added:

"About that hospital. I think on the whole it were better to give it Mr. Quiverful."

"But, my Lord," began Mr. Slope.

"Remember," said the Bishop. "I can't hold out any definite hope in this matter of the Deanery."

Mr. Slope understood.

"Perhaps your Lordship is right then about the hospital. I am sure I can arrange matters with Mr. Harding."

So the Bishop's mind was quietened, and Mr. Slope went off to solicit further help from the powers whom he had so sedulously flattered in London. Nor was his mind free from thoughts of his success with Mrs. Bold.

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The chief topic of conversation at Barchester was the approaching fete at Ullathorne. Eleanor Bold who had become very intimate with the Stanhopes was to go with them. She

was vexed that Mr. Slope was to be of the party but could not reasonably object.

The Bishop returned from a visit—this had been his reward for his wife's victory over Mr. Slope. Mrs. Proudie welcomed him kindly and asked after the Archbishop.

"Was any mention made of the Dean's successor?"

"It was just mentioned, my dear, just mentioned."

"I am told that Mr. Slope is looking to be the new Dean."

"Yes—certainly I believe he is," said the Bishop.

"And what did you say in the matter?" asked his lady.

"I hope you are not going to forward so preposterous an attempt?"

"Well, my dear, I did promise to mention it to the Archbishop," replied Dr. Proudie. "But, my dear, I haven't assisted him at all—hardly."

It became evident that Mrs. Proudie was not pleased. The Bishop attempted to excuse himself, on the grounds of his desire to remove from the palace someone, whose presence he felt was objectionable to her. The Bishop hoped she would be pleased at such a removal.

Mrs. Proudie pleased! Pleased for her enemy to receive a deanery with £1,200 a year!

Medea, when describing her country's customs, assured her foreign auditor that in her land captives were eaten. Mrs. Proudie was the Medea at Barchester. She had no idea of not eating Mr. Slope; she would indeed pick him to the last bone.

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If all Barchester anticipated the fete at Ullathorne with enjoyment, the day itself could not but be fraught with anxiety for Miss Thorne and the steward, Mr. Plomacy. The "quality" as the upper classes were so discriminately designated by the lower classes, were to eat "breakfast" on the lawn, while the rest were to eat "dinner" in the park. Nor was this the only problem, for Miss Thorne was anxious to arrange "sports," and to her this signified nothing invented later than the Elizabethan age.

"And so there will be," said Mr. Plomacy. "They'll all be sporting with the young ladies in the laurel walks. Them's the sports they care about most nowadays."

Nevertheless the "Quintain" as Miss Thorne knew it should be called, or the "Rattle Trap" as her brother described it, was set up. For as he said, even if he wasn't too old to ride after hounds, then, when he did ride over hedges "there isn't any bag of flour coming after me."

However, Miss Thorne had great trust in a hero of hers, the son of a tenant farmer. If the "quality" were no longer prepared to battle the "Quintain," then she must trust to the thighs and sinews of native yeoman stock. Had not her ancestors done so, before her?

An hour after her guests had been expected, Miss Thorne began to be impatient.

Mrs. Clantantrum was the first. Barchester's hired horses had muddled her dress.

The Lookalofts were the second to arrive, and they should have been on the other side of the park railings.

"Oh, Mrs. Lookaloft," said Miss Thorne. "I'm sorry you've come in such low dresses, as we're all going out of doors."

"Dear, no! Thank ye, Miss Thorne," said Mrs. Lookaloft "the girls and myself are quite used to low dresses when we're out."

Soon other guests arrived. The Grantlys and the Stanhopes almost at the same moment. Alas, it was Dr. Arabin who saw Eleanor helped from her carriage by Mr. Slope. Her discomforture was luckily drowned by the chatter of the Bishop and his lady's arrival. Following them nearly all the other guests arrived.

"Shall you ride at the 'Quintain' Mr. Foster," said Miss Thorne, as she had said to many others. But he could only look at his exceptionable pantaloons and feel "he was not quite prepared."

Even Miss Thorne's hero came to grief, being unable to wield his spear. So the dear old lady was forced to abandon the sports.

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Eleanor's first thoughts had been to look for her father. Her first desire to explain her having arrived in the company of Mr. Slope. Painful as it was to admit her fault, wronged as she felt she had been; it was even more fearful to realise that

her father, whom she loved so dearly, had suspected her too. Having cried, she clung to him and begged him never to suspect her again of anything so horrid.

With Eleanor had arrived the Signora; great as the sensation of her arrival had been, it was soon paled by that of the de Courcys.

"Look, look, Mr. Slope," Madeline cried suddenly. "The high spiritualities and temporalities of the land in league together against poor me."

And right she was for Mrs. Proudie had found a more than sympathetic listener in Lady de Courcy.

"You don't know the intriguing villainy of the woman."

"But you say she has only one leg?"

"She's as full of mischief as though she had ten!"

But they were interrupted by Mr. Thorne who came to take Lady de Courcy into Breakfast. Eleanor's arm was claimed by Bertie Stanhope. But her pleasure in escaping Mr. Slope was for a moment marred as she perceived Dr. Arabin hovering alone over Signora Neroni.

Dr. Arabin's thoughts had, for his own peace of mind, been only too concentrated on Eleanor.

"Why, what ails you?" the Signora asked. "Mr. Slope is full of life and spirits, why don't you rival him? He is active, you are passive. He will gain his rewards and you yours."

"And what will be my rewards?" asked Dr. Arabin.

"The heart of some woman you will be too austere to own that you love and the respect of some few friends you will be too proud to own that you value," Madeline replied, then asked: "but do you really despise these good things—money, power and feminine beauty?"

Dr. Arabin looked at her, and then beyond where he saw Eleanor seated between Bertie and Mr. Slope. The Signora understood only too well, and resolved that should Bertie fail to win Eleanor, she would do all she could to aid Dr. Arabin and destroy Mr. Slope's chances.

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Much heartburning had been caused among the other tenants' wives on hearing that the Lookalofts had made their way into the drawing room.

"I tell 'ee they was dressed finer nor half than any of the family, with all their neckses and bozoms stark naked as a born baby!"

"Drat it, how the devil does she manage with her rheumatiz?"

"Madam isn't a bit too pleased. They was expected to come here just like the rest of us."

So with this reflection and the good food, peace was restored.

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When Eleanor got up from the table she was annoyed to find herself pursued by Mr. Slope. Turning she told him directly that she wished to be alone. But unabashed, and indeed only imagining that she was cross because he had been so dilatory in declaring himself, Mr Slope insisted.

"Do not ask me to leave you till I have spoken a few words with which my heart is full."

"I do not know what you can have to say, that you could not have said at the table," parried Eleanor in desperation, and in her efforts to get out of view of the dining room, she had inadvertently walked into the shrubberies.

"I had hoped—" Mr. Slope began.

"I do not know and need not know what hope you mean."

"That is cruel and unchristian, too. Are we not all bidden to hope?" he cried and then: "beautiful woman! Lovely Eleanor! I adore you. Yes, I love you. How sweet to walk to Heaven with you by my side. Ah, Eleanor, may we not walk that sweet path together? Eleanor—."

"My name, Mr. Slope, is Mrs. Bold."

"Sweetest angel be not so cold," and Mr. Slope endeavoured to pass his arm round her waist. Eleanor jumped away and turning, gave him a sound box on the ears, which sounded among the trees like a thunderclap.

"I never, never, will speak another word to you," and Eleanor fled.

For a full ten minutes Mr. Slope stood still, nursing his grievance. Oh, for the chance to get up into a mighty pulpit, and preach to the world a loud sermon against Mrs. Bold. To denounce her publicly would have greatly eased his bosom.

Finally, he collected himself and returned to the festivities he now despised.

Eleanor, after her escape, ran thankfully to Charlotte Stanhope.

"That fulsome, fawning, abominable man," she cried. "Horrid, abominable hypocrite."

Then, between her tears, she told her friend the whole story, the finale of which made Charlotte laugh heartily, but only for a while. Sincerely she sympathised with her friend. Could Bertie do anything, she asked? Should Bertie warn the man? But this Eleanor did not want. However, she was greatly relieved that she would not have to travel back with Mr. Slope, and agreed to travel with Bertie, whom they now set off to find; Eleanor calmed by her friend's kindness, and Charlotte determined to use the incident for the advantage of Bertie.

They found him eventually smoking a cigar. Then Charlotte hurried away to take Madeline home. And Bertie was alone with Eleanor. It cannot be said that he was at ease. A scamp he might be, but there was a cold calculation about his sister's plan, which was quite at variance with his character. The prudence of the plan was as distasteful to him as the iniquity.

They began to talk of his profession.

"Why do you not settle steadily to work here in Barchester?" Eleanor asked.

"To make busts of the Bishop, Dean and Chapter? Or an elaborate tombstone for a prebendary's widow. A dead lady with a Grecian nose, a bandeau and intricate lace veil, lying on a marble sofa from among the legs of which death will be creeping out and probing at his victim with a toasting fork?"

Eleanor laughed.

"You are determined then to push your fortune in other lands?" she asked.

"I am determined," Bertie replied slowly and significantly. "I am determined in this matter to be guided solely by you."

"Wholly by me?" she cried.

Bertie stopped and let go her arm.

"Wholly by you," he repeated. Then he asked. "We

have been very good friends have we not? You have been kind enough to say you take an interest in me."

Eleanor nodded her head and began to walk on.

"You know how fond my sister is of you and how she loves me," Bertie continued. "You know, too, how she manages for us all. Nor is it easy for her. Poor Madeline's marriage and accident, my mother's ill-health, my father's absence from England, my own roving, idle self. In short—she wants me to marry you."

Feelings of great bitterness first attacked Eleanor. She could see the whole plot clearly.

"Miss Stanhope does me a great honour," she exclaimed coldly.

"Pray don't be angry with her—or with me," he begged.

"Certainly not with you, Mr. Stanhope," Eleanor said with great sarcasm. "And may I ask why you have told me this singular story? Since I presume you and your sister are not exactly of one mind on the subject?"

How difficult it was for Bertie. How to explain that he must do as his sister told him? As he explained, Eleanor became more and more angry. She appeared to herself as a pawn in a Stanhope game of chess.

"I wish to go back to the house alone," she said firmly.

But Bertie's good nature, and now that the "unpleasant job" was over, his good sense also reasserted itself. He bustled about getting the carriage for her. Made his father escort her home, tactfully excusing himself. Indeed, he was so thoughtful that by the time she was home, Eleanor had almost forgiven him.

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Before setting out for the party at Ullathorne, Bishop Proudie had sent a message to Mr. Quiverful asking him to be at the Palace on the morrow. This acquiescence to his wife's wishes secured him much consideration from that lady. Is not great comfort to be derived from a wife well obeyed?

Great rejoicing was there at the Quiverfuls. All of whom concurred with Mrs. Quiverful that hard though Mrs. Proudie might be she was "all right at bottom." Those who have just rendered one a great service usually are so considered.

This news, however, was very bitter to the Grantly faction, whose forces at Plumstead had been strengthened by the arrival of Dr. Gwynne from Oxford. A distinguished scholar and Master of Lazarus College, he was an important addition to their ranks.

Bitter, too, were Eleanor Bold's feelings after the Ullathorne party. It seemed to her that all Barchester must know of her experiences and humiliations of that afternoon. Not least distressing was the necessity of telling her sister-in-law. For Mary Bold had, not a day previously, warned her gently against both Mr. Slope and the Stanhopes. Mentors proved right are indeed difficult to pardon. To tell her father, also, was another cross to bear. But in this case she was able to dismiss the unpleasant subject of her own cares, in consoling him about not getting the hospital preferment. However, they passed a tranquil evening together, disturbed only by a note to Eleanor from Madeline Neroni requesting an interview.

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"There's something wrong," said Madeline, as she heard her father return alone from Ullathorne.

"I fear it's all up with Bertie," replied Charlotte. And so she soon learnt it was from her father.

"You'll ruin me among you," he complained. Nevertheless, if such was the case, if his children were unprincipled, selfish and disreputable, who was to blame for the education which had had so injurious an effect?

"As sure as God rules in Heaven, I will not maintain him any longer in idleness," he exclaimed.

"Ruling in Heaven!" retorted Charlotte. "You must rule him here on earth."

At this moment they both heard Bertie entering the house softly. Dr. Stanhope called out for him.

"And how did you get home, sir, with your fair companion?" Bertie asked his father.

"Would it suit you, sir, to give me some idea as to what your present intentions are?"

"I'll do anything you suggest, sir," Bertie replied.

"My time for suggestion has gone by. I have only one order to give, and that is that you leave my house."

"To-night?" asked Bertie nonchalantly.

"You have disgraced me, sir; disgraced yourself, and me and your sisters."

"I'm glad at least, sir, that I have not disgraced my mother."

Hopelessly, Charlotte endeavoured to make her brother behave, and her father less angry.

"Let us at least not quarrel among ourselves," she cried. "Let Bertie leave to-morrow. But now let us arrange some scheme together."

"If he will leave then, I will give him £10 and £5 a month so long as he stays in Carrara."

"Well, sir! It won't be long," was Bertie's thanks "for I shall have starved to death in three months."

"He must have marble," Charlotte pleaded.

"I have plenty for three months," Bertie assured her. "It will be no use attempting anything large in so limited a time, unless I do my own tombstone."

So Bertie disappears from the scene. Let us not judge him too harshly.

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The next day Mrs. Bold arrived for her interview with Madeline. The latter at once thanked her for coming and pressed her for her forgiveness of her brother and sister.

"And now, Mrs. Bold, I am going to tell you something which you may perhaps think indelicate."

Eleanor felt alarmed, for what the Signora thought indelicate might well appear to her extremely indecent.

"Do you know Dr. Arabin?" asked Madeline.

"Yes—I am acquainted with him," said Eleanor, but a blush belied her understatement.

"How stiff you are Mrs. Bold—and while I am doing all that one woman can do for another."

Then, as Eleanor's thoughts chased each other in amazement, Madeline Neroni raised herself on her elbow and looking straight at her companion said:

"I will ask you one more question, one even more singular.

Do you love him, love him with all your heart and soul? For I tell you that he loves you, adores you, worships you, thinks of you and nothing else. What would I not give to be loved in such a way by such a man?"

Eleanor stood up, moved, but uncertain.

"What I tell you is God's own truth," continued the Signora. "But you must not betray me. He suspects nothing of my knowing his inmost heart. Remember, too, that he is not like other men. Do not expect him to come with vows and oaths and pretty presents, to kneel at your feet and kiss your shoestrings. With him Yea will stand for Yea and Nay for Nay. And now Mrs. Bold I will not keep you. If ever you are a happy wife in that man's house, we shall be far away, but I shall expect you to write me one line to say that you have forgiven the sins of the family!"

Eleanor pressed her hand and then left, her pride somewhat offended, but her heart joyous.

* * * * *

Next day the Signora held a levee. Dr. Arabin was there, he knew not why, for he began to understand that he loved Mrs. Bold. Mr. Slope was there, although he was aware of the impropriety in one about to become Dean. Mr. Thorne also had come, more carefully dressed than ever, to his sister's mild dismay.

Mr. Slope was not pleased when the Signora moved him out of the chair at the head of her couch, and requested Mr. Thorne to sit in it. However, after a few minutes' polite conversation with the Squire, Madeline turned to him.

"Only think Mr. Thorne," she began, "Mr. Slope is to be our new Dean. He is triumphing on all sides indeed."

"Indeed, Signora, we all know nothing about it," he replied.

"He is to be the new Dean," asserted Madeline. "Indeed, he is not only to have the Deanery but a wife to put in it. A wife with a large fortune, too. Certainly, it never rains but it pours."

Mr. Slope began to look uncomfortable.

"Come, Mr. Slope, don't be bashful. Tell us with what

words she accepted you—with a simple ‘yes’ or with two ‘No No’s’ which make an affirmative?”

Mr. Slope felt the company’s eyes all resting on him.

“What, Mr. Slope, no answer? Can it be that she refused you? Widows are proverbially cautious. Perhaps you should have waited till you could show her the key of the Deanery.”

“I have no aspirations such as you impute to me,” said Mr. Slope with a vain attempt at dignity.

“One other piece of advice, Mr. Slope; I’ll only offer you one other,” and then Madeline commenced singing:

“It’s good to be merry and wise, Mr. Slope;

It’s good to be honest and true;

It’s good to be off with old love—Mr. Slope,

Before you are on with the new.”

Then the Signora threw herself back on the sofa, and laughed merrily.

* * * * *

Bitter were the feelings yet at Plumstead. They had lost the hospital in spite of Dr. Gwynne’s and Dr. Arabin’s assistance. Furthermore, everyone insisted that the latter was frequently to be found at the Stanhopes.

“You really must speak to him Archdeacon,” complained Mrs. Grantly. “You should never have put a bachelor in St. Eowolds.”

It was in vain for the Archdeacon to insist on his friend’s high moral character.

Thus were things at Plumstead when the noise of a carriage was heard. The Grantly’s were amazed to hear one so late. How very much more amazed were they to see Mr. Harding.

“How are things at Barchester?” asked Dr. Grantly. “Has Mr. Slope been made Dean yet?”

“No, he has not, but——”

“But, what?” said the impatient Archdeacon.

“They have offered it to me!” replied Mr. Harding.

Great indeed were the rejoicings, only to be shattered by Mr. Harding’s assurance, with difficulty uttered, that he felt obliged to refuse, on the grounds of his age. Never had the Archdeacon been so flabbergasted.

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While this event was taking place, Miss Thorne had arrived in Barchester and had carried Eleanor back to Ullathorne. It was no accident that she had asked Dr. Arabin to lunch on the next day.

"It is a lovely sunset," began Eleanor when later next day they found themselves alone.

For a long while the conversation remained equally trivial. Then Dr. Arabin suddenly stopped in front of her.

"Mrs. Bold, I owe you a great retribution for an offence of which I have been guilty towards you."

And Eleanor knew he spoke of his suspicions regarding her and Mr. Slope. She listened to him in silence. Then she got up, almost in tears.

"Indeed, Dr. Arabin, I do forgive you."

He took her hand and for a moment they stood facing one another.

"Mrs. Bold!" he began, and then they were in each other's arms.

"Oh, Eleanor, my own, my wife," he cried.

Miss Thorne was indeed surprised at the precipitant conclusion of her match making!

However, she was well pleased. As indeed, too, was Mrs. Grantly. But no one could have been more delighted than old Mr. Harding. He felt that he could welcome no one as a son-in-law with more sincere delight. Joyous, indeed, was the scene between him and Eleanor, when she told him.

They were interrupted by the Archdeacon, who on first hearing the news flatly disbelieved it. Then he felt annoyed, for was not all his gloomy perspicacity proved utterly false. However, it was not long before his joy became manifest. Then, Eleanor having left the room, Mr. Harding propounded his scheme, to which at length Dr. Grantly agreed—to attempt to get the Deanery for Dr. Arabin.

On his journey home the Archdeacon called in to congratulate his friend. Further, he resolved to atone to Eleanor by giving her a truly magnificent wedding from Plumstead.

"So we're sold after all, Sue," he said jocularly to his wife.

"Eleanor has had more sense than we gave her credit for," affirmed Mrs. Grantly.

By now Mr. Slope had become aware of his failure over the Deanery, but, be it said in his favour, he did not despair. He knew of a lately widowed lady in London, whom he was aware would be only too anxious to receive consolation. First, however, he must say adieu to the Bishop into whose presence he was indeed shortly summoned. Mr. Slope was not surprised to find Mrs. Proudie with her husband. Nor was he surprised that she insisted on remaining.

"It grieves me much to find fault with a clergyman," began the Bishop.

"Why, what have I done amiss, my lord?"

"What done amiss?" cried Mrs. Proudie. "What of the Signora Neroni? Do you think I have not heard of your kneeling at that creature's feet—if indeed she has any feet—and of your constant slobbering over her hand. I tell you, Mr. Slope, clergymen have been unfrocked for less."

"At any rate, madame, I was introduced to her in your drawing room," retorted Mr. Slope and turned to the Bishop. "Am I to understand, my lord, that I am discarded at your wife's bidding because I am acquainted with the daughter of one of your prebendaries?"

Yet, however much he might threaten, Mr. Slope knew he must go. And go he did straight away, and was so successful in consoling the rich widow that she soon agreed to become Mrs. Slope.



Thus Mrs. Proudie remained with her power unchallenged at the Palace. Nevertheless, she had learnt moderation from the example of Mr. Slope's failure to alter cathedral traditions.

The Quiverfuls settled comfortably into the hospital. Greater respect was accorded them because of Mr. Harding's benevolent gesture in personally introducing Mr. Quiverful to the old Bedesmen.

Nothing could have been more magnificent than the wedding arranged for the Arabins by the Archdeacon; nothing more generous than the fine presents he showered on everyone.

Before this event the Stanhope family returned with relief to Lake Como. Nor did Eleanor forget her promised letter to the Signora.

Nothing could have exceeded the happiness of the Arabins. They lived on terms of politeness with the Proudies and in the greatest friendship with the family at Plumstead. Mr. Harding had agreed to live at the Deanery with them. There was, indeed, perfect mutual confidence between Eleanor and her husband. One secret only she had not shared with him. He has never learned how Mr. Slope had his ears boxed.

Nor was Mr. Harding sad that he had not been tempted to assume the dignity offered to him. Maybe he was no hero, nor a man to be toasted at public dinners, but a man without guile, believing humbly in the religion he had striven to teach, and guided by the precepts he had striven to learn.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

by

EMILY BRONTË

Emily Brontë (1818-48) was the daughter of Patrick Brontë, an Irishman who was perpetual curate of Haworth, Yorkshire, until his death in 1861. She was part author with her sisters of Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, published in 1846. "Wuthering Heights," her only novel, was published under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell, in 1848. It has been both filmed and dramatised and ranks as one of the great novels of the period.

I HAVE just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour I shall be troubled with. He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld in him as little love for the society of others as I felt myself.

I announced my name. "Mr. Heathcliff?" I said.

A nod was the answer.

"Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant," I continued.

I was then curtly invited to enter the house. Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. Before passing the threshold I detected the date "1500" and the name Hareton Earnshaw in the carving which surrounded it. I would have made a request for a short history of the place, but his attitude at the door seemed to demand my speedy entrance or complete departure.

One step brought us into the family sitting room, without an introductory passage. This apartment and its furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a stalwart northern farmer. But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman. I found

him very intelligent on the topics we touched and before I went home I was encouraged so far as to volunteer another visit to-morrow. He evidently wished no repetition of my intrusion. I shall go notwithstanding.

According to my intention, I took my hat and after four miles walk arrived at Heathcliff's garden gate just in time to escape the first feather flakes of a snow shower. I knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled and the dogs howled. The snow began to drive more thickly. I seized the handle again, when a young man without a coat and shouldering a pitchfork appeared in the yard. He hailed me to follow him and we at length arrived in the huge, warm, cheerful apartment where I was formerly received. I was pleased to see the mistress of the house, an individual whose existence I had never previously suspected. I bowed and waited, thinking she would bid me to take a seat. She remained mute and motionless. I had a distinct view of her whole figure and countenance. She was slender, and scarcely past girlhood; an admirable form and the most exquisite little face that I have ever had the pleasure of beholding.

"Were you asked to tea?" she finally demanded.

"I shall be glad to have a cup," I answered.

"Were you asked?" she repeated.

"No," I said, half smiling. "You are the proper person to ask me."

At this she resumed her chair in a pet. Her forehead corrugated and her red underlip pushed out, like a child's, ready to cry.

Meanwhile, the young man stood before the fire and looked down at me from the corners of his eyes as if there were some mortal feud between us. His dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff. My embarrassment was somewhat relieved by the entrance of Heathcliff.

"You see, I came according to my promise," I exclaimed, assuming the cheerful.

"I wonder that you should choose a thick snowstorm to ramble about in. Do you know that you run the risk of being lost in the marshes?"

"Perhaps I can get a guide from among your lads. Could you spare me one?"

"No. I could not."

"Oh, indeed! Well, I must trust to my own sagacity."

"Are you going to make the tea?" demanded he of the shabby coat, of the young lady.

"Is he to have any?" she appealed to Heathcliff.

"Get it ready, will you?" he answered.

"It is strange," I began in the interval of swallowing one cup of tea and receiving another. "It is strange how many would not believe that there could be any happiness in a life of such complete exile as yours. Yet I'll venture to say that, surrounded by your family, and with your amiable lady——"

"My amiable lady!" he interrupted. "Where is she—my amiable lady?"

"Mrs. Heathcliff, your wife, I mean."

"Well, yes. Oh, you would intimate that her spirit has taken the post of ministering angel and guards the fortunes of Wuthering Heights even when her body is gone, is that it? Mrs. Heathcliff is my daughter-in-law," said Heathcliff.

I found that her husband was dead, and the surly young man was named Hareton Earnshaw. There was little conversation during the rest of the meal, so at its conclusion I approached the window. To go home was impossible. I suggested that I might be allowed to shelter for the rest of the night there, but Heathcliff would not hear of it. I suggested that Joseph should guide me home. This, too, was refused. He had retired to milk the cows, I followed him there and seized his lantern, and calling out that I would send it back on the morrow, I rushed to the nearest postern.

"Maister, he's staling O' lantern," shouted the ancient, d set the two dogs on me.

From under the hairy monsters, Heathcliff and Hareton finally rescued me. I was then given over to Zillah, a stout housewife who had emerged at my cries of anger. I felt sick and faint, and did not need to be pressed to stay. After she had given me a glass of brandy, Zillah ushered me to bed.

While she led me upstairs, Zillah told me to hide the candle and not make a noise, for her master had an odd notion about that room and would not willingly let anyone sleep there.

Then she left me and I retired speedily into the great oak bed by the window. As I lay there I noticed the paint of the window ledge had writing scratched on to it. I looked more closely and read nothing but the name Catherine Earnshaw repeated in varying characters, large and small, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff and then to Catherine Linton.

In rapid listlessness I leant my head against the pillow and soon slept. I woke from a heavy sleep and a disagreeable dream with a start. I remembered where I was slowly and realised that what had awakened me was the tapping of a fir branch against the window. I opened the window and stretched out my hand to seize this importunate branch, instead of which my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of a nightmare came over me. I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it and a melancholy voice cried "Let me in—let me in!"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Catherine Linton," it replied shiveringly. "I'm come home. I'd lost my way on the moors."

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cry out. To my confusion I discovered the yell was not ideal. Heathcliff entered the room and asked what I was doing there. His face was white and his agitation extreme. I told him Zillah had showed me to the room and then I related my experience, dressing as I spoke. Then went downstairs, having resolved to spend no more time in that room. As I left it he seized the window and wrenched open the lattice, bursting as he did so into an uncontrollable passion of tears. "Come in," he sobbed. "Cathy, do come."

I drew off, half angry to have listened to this outburst. I sat by the fire downstairs until it was light and the rest of the household astir, then, declining to share their breakfast, I set off for Thrushcroft Grange. My host overtook me as I reached the gate and I was glad of his silent company as far as the gates of my house, for the moor was one billowy white ocean, and I should certainly have lost my way.

That night I decided that I could struggle with solitude and low spirits no longer, so when Mrs. Dean, my housekeeper, brought me my supper, I desired her to sit down and tell me about my landlord's family and himself. She told me that she had been at Thrushcroft Grange eighteen years, since her mistress married.

"You have seen a great many alterations since then," I remarked.

"I have, and troubles too."

"Mr. Heathcliff had a son? And that young lady, Mrs. Heathcliff, is his widow?"

"Yes, she was my late master's daughter. Catherine Linton was her maiden name."

"And who is Hareton Earnshaw?"

"He is the late Mrs. Linton's nephew."

"I see the house at Wuthering Heights has Earnshaw carved above the door. Are they an old family?"

"Very old, sir, and Hareton is the last of them, as Miss Cathy is of us, I mean, the Lintons."

"Well, Mrs. Dean, it will be a charitable deed to tell me something of my neighbours," I said.

* * * * *

Before I came to live here, she commenced—waiting no further invitation to her story—I was almost always at Wuthering Heights, because my mother had nursed Mr. Hindley Earnshaw, Hareton's father.

I remember one fine summer morning Mr. Earnshaw, the old master, came downstairs. He said that he was going to Liverpool, and that the children were to be good while he was gone.

It seemed a long while to us all, the three days of his absence, and when he did come back he brought with him a child. A dirty, ragged, black-haired child, big enough to walk and talk. He said that he had found him in the streets of Liverpool, homeless and without parents. He had resolved to adopt him and named him Heathcliff, the name of a son who died in childhood.

Soon he and Miss Cathy were very thick. Hindley hated him and from the beginning Heathcliff seemed to breed bad

feeling, except in old Mr. Earnshaw, who took to him strangely, treating him as an equal to his son, in fact, almost preferring, him.

In the course of time Mr. Earnshaw began to fail, and at last our curate prevailed upon him to have Mr. Hindley sent to college so that he might have some form of education.

At last the hour came when Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth were ended. He died quietly in his chair, one October evening seated by the fireside.

Mr. Hindley came home to the funeral and, a thing that amazed us and set the neighbours talking, he brought a wife with him. What she was or where she was born he never informed us. She was rather thin, but young, and fresh complexioned. Her eyes sparkled like diamonds, and I remarked that mounting the stairs made her breathe very hard and that sometimes she coughed very troublesomely. But I knew nothing of what these symptoms portended, and had no impulse to sympathise with her. A few words from her evincing a dislike to Heathcliff and Hindley drove him from their company to the servants, insisted that he should labour out of doors and deprived him of the instruction of the curate. Heathcliff bore his degradation pretty well at first because Cathy taught him what she learned and worked or played with him in the fields.

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One Sunday evening it chanced that they were banished from the sitting room and when I went to call them to supper I could find them nowhere. Hindley flew into a passion and told us to bolt the doors, and swore they should not be let in that night. Very late that night I saw a lantern glimmer at the gate. It was Heathcliff by himself. I ran to prevent him waking Mr. Earnshaw by knocking.

"Where is Miss Catherine?" I cried hurriedly. "No accident, I hope?"

"At Thrushcroft Grange," he answered. "And I should be there, too, only they had not the manners to ask me to stay."

He then told me how he and Catherine had escaped from the washhouse where they were confined and made their way over the moors to Thrushcroft Grange. There they peered

through the windows of the drawing room and frightened the young Lintons, Edgar and Isabella, who called out to their parents. They, together with the servants, rushed out into the gardens and Cathy was seized by the ankle by the bulldog. Old Mr. and Mrs. Linton, on recognising her, took her into the house, driving Heathcliff off, saying that he was too crude and coarse to be tolerated near their own children.

When Hindley heard of this he was furious. Heathcliff received no flogging. Instead he was told that the first word he spoke to Miss Catherine on her return should ensure his dismissal.

Cathy stayed at Thrushcroft Grange five weeks—till Christmas. When she returned to us she was much changed. She wore fine clothes and her manners were improved greatly. Heathcliff noticed the change in her and was hurt when she remarked on his own dirtiness. The next day the Lintons came to dinner, and on Hindley's orders, Heathcliff was banished to the garret. Edgar and he had taken a violent dislike to each other. After that the Lintons visited us frequently at Wuthering Heights and his devotion to Catherine was plain for all to see. The hatred between Hindley and Heathcliff continued, the latter swearing that one day, he would pay Hindley back for all that he had suffered at his hands, no matter how long he had to wait to do it.

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Here my housekeeper interrupted herself, saying that her gossiping could not interest me. I assured her that this was not so and she continued:—

On the morning of a fine day in June my first bonny little nursling, and the last of the ancient Earnshaw stock was born. We were busy working in a far away field when the girl, that usually brought our breakfast came running an hour too soon across the meadow and up the lane, calling me as she ran. "Oh, such a grand bairn," she panted. "The finest lad that ever breathed! But he says the missus must go. He says she's been in a consumption these many months. She'll be dead before the winter."

I hurried eagerly home to admire the child, though I was very sorry for Hindley's sake. He had only two idols in his

life, his wife and himself, and I did not know how he would bear the loss. When I got to the door of Wuthering Heights he stood at the front door. As I passed in I asked how the lady was.

"Nearly ready to run," he answered, putting on a cheerful smile. "Are you going upstairs? Will you tell her that I'll come if she promises not to talk?"

I delivered this message to Mrs. Earnshaw. She seemed in flighty spirits and replied merrily:

"I hardly spoke a word Ellen, and there he has gone out twice, crying. Well, say that I promise not to speak a word; but my promise does not bind me not to laugh at him."

Poor soul! Till within a week of her death, that gay heart never failed and her husband went on doggedly affirming that her health improved daily. She seemed to believe him, then one night, while leaning on his shoulder in the act of saying that she thought she would get up to-morrow, a fit of coughing took her—a very slight one. He raised her in his arms, she put her two hands about his neck, her face changed, and she was dead.

The child, Hareton, then fell wholly into my hands. Mr. Earnshaw, provided he saw his son well and never heard him cry, was contented. For himself, he grew desperate. He cursed and defied God and gave himself up to reckless drinking and dissipation. The servants could not bear his tyrannical ways. Joseph and I were the only two who would stay.

The master's bad ways formed a pretty example for Heathcliff and Catherine. His treatment of the former would have made a devil of a saint. Soon nobody decent came near us, with the exception of Edgar Linton who still visited Cathy. At fifteen she was the Queen of the countryside. But Heathcliff kept his hold on her affections, and Edgar Linton, with all his superiority, found it hard to make as deep an impression.

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One afternoon, when Hindley was from home, Heathcliff decided to give himself a holiday. He had reached the age of sixteen then, and apparently took a grim pleasure in exciting aversion in his few acquaintances.

He came into the house as I was assisting Miss Cathy to arrange her dress.

"Cathy, are you busy this afternoon?" he asked.

"Isabella and Edgar Linton talked of calling this afternoon."

Heathcliff had not time to express his feelings further, for, having knocked gently, Edgar Linton entered. Doubtless Catherine marked the striking contrast between her two friends as one came in and the other went out.

"I am not come too soon, am I?" he said, casting a look at me. I had begun to tidy the plate at the far end of the dresser.

"No. What are you doing there, Nelly?"

"My work, miss," I replied. (Mr. Hindley had given me directions to make a third party at any private visits Linton chose to make.)

She, supposing Linton did not see her, snatched the cloth from my hand, and pinched me very spitefully on the arm, then after hesitating a moment, slapped me on the cheek.

"Leave the room," she ordered.

"Catherine love! Catherine!" Edgar interposed. He thoughtlessly laid hold of her arm, in an instant it was wrung free and the astonished creature felt her hand applied to his own ear. The insulted visitor moved towards his hat.

"Where are you going?" Catherine demanded.

"Can I stay, after you have struck me?" asked Linton.

"Well go, if you please," she cried. "Get away and now I'll cry—I'll cry myself sick."

She dropped down on her knees by a chair and set to weeping in serious earnest. Edgar preserved his resolution as far as the court, but he returned, and was alone with her until intelligence of Mr. Hindley drove him speedily to his horse and Catherine to her chamber.

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Later that night, when Hindley was alone in his room with his drunken thoughts, she came to me in the kitchen. As the door opened Heathcliff rose from his seat, and walked, as I thought, through to the barn, and she did not see him.

It turned out that he had only got as far as the other side of the settle.

"Nelly," she said. "Are you alone? Where is Heathcliff?"

"About his work," was my answer, and he did not contradict me.

"Nelly, will you keep a secret?" Catherine pursued.

"Is it worth keeping?" I enquired.

"Yes," she replied. "To-day Edgar Linton asked me to marry him. I accepted him, Nelly. Be quick and tell me whether I was wrong."

"You have accepted him! Then what is the use of discussing it? But tell me, first and foremost, do you love Mr. Linton?"

"Of course I do," she answered.

"Why do you love him?"

"Nonsense! I do—that's sufficient."

"He won't always be young and handsome, and may not always be rich."

"He is now, and I only have to do with the present! Yet I feel in my heart and soul I feel I am wrong. Nelly, I had a dream last night. I dreamt I was in heaven, and broke my heart weeping to come back to earth. The angels were so angry they flung me out into the middle of the Heath on top of Wuthering Heights, where I woke, weeping with joy. That will explain my doubts as well as anything. I have no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven, and if my brother had not brought Heathcliff so low I should not have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now, so he will never know how much I love him; and that not because he is handsome, Nelly, but because he is more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as frost from fire."

Ere this speech was ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence. He had listened till he heard Catherine say that it would degrade her to marry him and had stayed to hear no further. She, sitting on the ground, had not seen him go.

Our confidences were here interrupted by the arrival of Joseph. Catherine sent him out to seek for Heathcliff, saying that she must speak to him before she went to bed. He was

nowhere to be found and as the night drew on she grew desperate, standing at the yard gate looking out over the moor, calling his name. There she remained all night, despite a downpour of rain that began about midnight.

In the morning she had a fever and had to take to her bed. She was reluctant to do so, for Heathcliff. Dr. Kenneth, as soon as he saw her, pronounced her dangerously ill. However, she weathered it through, and as soon as she was convalescent old Mrs. Linton took her back to Thrushcroft Grange. A kindness she had reason to repent, for both she and her husband took the fever and died within a few days of each other. Edgar Linton was, as multitudes have been before and will be after him, infatuated, and as soon as his mourning permitted, Catherine and he were married.

I was persuaded to move with her here, and much against my will I kissed Hareton goodbye, and have not seen him from that day to this. Since the day of his disappearance nothing had been heard of Heathcliff.

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At this point of the housekeeper's story she happened to glance at the clock and, seeing the lateness of the hour, insisted on my retiring. Four weeks of fever prevented her continuing her memories, but being recovered I persuaded her to continue.

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I got Miss Catherine and myself to Thrushcroft Grange, and to my agreeable disappointment she behaved better than I had dared to hope. She seemed over-fond of Mr. Linton and even to his sister they showed plenty of affection. I noticed that Mr. Edgar had a deep-rooted fear of ruffling her humour, but I believe they were in possession of a deep and growing happiness. It ended. One afternoon in September Heathcliff returned. Catherine was astonished and delighted, and took him to the drawing room where tea was being served. Edgar received him courteously, but coldly. In the face of Catherine's joy he could not do other than conceal his boyhood hatred of Heathcliff. We were all amazed at the change in Heathcliff.

He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man. His manner was dignified, but too stern for grace.

He confessed that he had, on hearing of her marriage, planned to return to see her once more, settle his score with Hindley, then prevent the law by doing execution on himself. Her pleasure at seeing him had changed his mind. I asked, as he departed, if he went to Ginerton. He replied no, to Wuthering Heights. Mr. Earnshaw had invited him when he called that morning.

I pondered this sentence painfully after he was gone. Was he turning into a hypocrite and coming into the country to work mischief under the cloak of friendship?

About the middle of the night I was wakened by Catherine gliding into my room.

"I cannot sleep, Ellen," she said by way of apology. "Edgar is sulky, because I gave a few sentences of praise of Heathcliff, and either because of a headache or a pang of envy, he cried. What do you think of his going to Wuthering Heights?"

I enquired.

"He explained it," she replied. "He called there to ask after me from you, supposing you to be there still. Hindley came out and finally asked him in. There were some persons sitting at cards. Heathcliff joined them. My brother lost some money to him, and finding him plentifully supplied with it, asked him to go again in the evening. Heathcliff means to offer liberal payment for permission to lodge at the Heights, and doubtless my brother's covetousness will prompt him to accept the terms."

"Have you no fear of the consequences, Mrs. Linton?"

"None for my friend," she replied. "A little for Hindley. But he can't be made morally worse than he is. But, Nelly! I am so happy. I cannot bear anyone to suffer, and as proof of it I'll go and make my peace with Edgar instantly. Good-night! I'm an angel!"

In this self-complacent conviction she departed and the proof of her success was evident on the morrow. Mr. Linton was returned to his usual good humour.

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Heathcliff—Mr. Heathcliff I should say in future—used the liberty of visiting Wuthering Heights cautiously at first, until gradually he had established his right to be expected. He had retained a great deal of the reserve for which his boyhood was remarkable; and that served to repress all startling demonstrations of feeling. My master's uneasiness experienced a lull, and a further circumstance diverted it into another channel for a space. His new source of trouble sprang from the not anticipated misfortune of Isabella Linton evincing a sudden and irresistible attraction towards the tolerated guest, Heathcliff. She was at that time a charming young lady of eighteen, possessed of a keen wit, keen feelings and a keen temper too, if irritated. Her brother was appalled at this fantastic preference. He would have been appalled still more had he known that her attachment arose unsolicited.

We had all remarked that for some time Miss Linton had fretted and pined over something, and one day, after the two of them had been on a visit to Wuthering Heights, she accused Catherine of preventing her from being alone with Heathcliff and, in the course of their wranglings, confessed that she loved Heathcliff. Catherine warned her against him, saying that though she was his friend, she would not recommend Isabella to bestow her heart on one of so hard a nature. I agreed with her, but it was useless. Isabella would not listen.

The next day Heathcliff called while Mr. Linton was from home, and Catherine in a light-hearted way, chose to tell him of Isabella's partiality. The latter was furious, and tore at Mrs. Linton, who had stopped her forcibly from leaving the room, with her nails.

"There's a tigress," Catherine exclaimed, setting her free. "How foolish to reveal those talons to him. Begone and hide your vixen's face."

Isabella went and the two of them dismissed the subject, from their tongues at any rate, but from the expression on Heathcliff's face, and the smile that lurked in his eyes, I could see that he planned something and something that was far from pleasant.

I soon saw how right my fears were, for the next time Heathcliff came Miss Linton was in the orchard. He met her and addressed her with unnecessary civility, not knowing that

I was watching from the kitchen window. Then my horrified eyes beheld the scoundrel embrace her. I drew the attention of Catherine, who was with me, to this. She arrived at the window just in time to see Isabella tear herself free, and a moment later Heathcliff opened the door. Catherine turned on him.

"Heathcliff, I said you were to leave Isabella alone!" she cried.

"What is it to you?" he growled. "I have a right to kiss her if she chooses and you have no right to object. I am not your husband. You need not be jealous of me."

"I am not jealous of you," replied the mistress. "If you like Isabella, you shall marry her. But do you like her Heathcliff?"

"And would Mr. Linton approve of his sister marrying that man?" I enquired.

"He would approve," returned my lady decisively.

"He might spare himself the trouble," said Heathcliff. "I could do as well without his approbation. And as to you Catherine, I want you to be aware that I know that you have treated me infernally—infernally! You are a fool if you fancy that I will suffer unrevenge. I swear I will make the most of your sister-in-law's love for me."

There upon they began arguing in good earnest, and I left them to seek the master. I told him what was afoot, and he descended to the kitchen where Mrs. Linton was scolding with renewed vigour. Heathcliff saw the master first, and made a hasty motion that she should be silent.

"How is this?" Linton said, addressing her. "What notion of propriety have you that you remain here after the language which has been held to you by this blackguard?"

"Have you been listening at the door, Edgar?" asked the mistress in a tone particularly calculated to provoke the master, and presently the two of them were quarrelling. Edgar refused to allow Heathcliff to stay in the house, or visit it again, and Heathcliff, on seeing that he was in earnest when he threatened to bring the gardeners and have him flung out, left. Catherine flew upstairs and threw herself on a sofa. Edgar followed, but only to enquire whether she would give up Heathcliff or himself. She would not answer, saying that she felt ill and

presently pretended to swoon. Edgar looked anxious, but I told him not to be alarmed, that Catherine had told me as we came upstairs that she would make herself ill to punish him. At this she flew to her room and locked the door. She refused all food for two days. Mr. Linton, for his part, spent most of those days in the library and did not enquire of his wife's occupations. Isabella and he had an hour's interview, during which he tried to elicit from her some sentiment of proper horror concerning Heathcliff's advances, without success.

Mrs. Linton on the third day unbarred her door and I took her in some tea and dry toast. She was still in a state of agitation, but I still preserved my external composure in spite of her ghastly countenance and strange, exaggerated manner. I told her, on her enquiry for her husband that he was well, but that his studies occupied him rather more than they ought. I should not have spoken so if I had known her true condition, but could not get rid of the notion that she acted part of her disorder.

She could not bear the notion that I had put into her head of Mr. Linton's philosophical resignation. Tossing about she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, tearing the pillow with her teeth then raising herself up, all burning hot, desired that I open the window. We were in the middle of winter, and I objected. At once she leaped from her bed, I tried to stop her but her delirious strength surpassed mine and she flung open the casement, thrust out her head and gulped in the frosty air. Perceiving reason to be useless I went to fetch Mr. Linton.

When he came to her she at first did not know him, but her delirium finally waned and she began to accuse him of thoughtlessness, and went over the old grievance of his quarrel with Heathcliff, in the course of which my part in revealing his presence on that fateful night was blurted out by Mr. Edgar. On hearing this a maniac's fury seized Catherine, and, being genuinely alarmed at her condition, I resolved to seek medical aid on my own responsibility.

Dr. Kenneth was fortunately just issuing from his house as I arrived, and said he would come at once. He told of a rumour he had heard, a rumour which alarmed me so that I outstripped him back to the Grange. He told me that Isabella and Heath-

cliff had been seen eloping on horseback that very night, and on ascending to Isabella's room I found that what he said was true. I resolved not to say anything to Mr. Linton just then and went back to my mistress's room and held my tongue. My scruples were useless for hard on my heels came a serving maid, who blurted out the news, in Mr. Linton's hearing, but fortunately out of his wife's. Later that night when the doctor had gone, I turned to Mr. Linton and asked if any measures were to be taken to bring the fugitives back.

"Hereafter she is only my sister in name," he answered. "Not because I disowned her, but because she disowned me."

After that he did not make any further enquiry or mention her name again.

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For two months the fugitives remained absent. In those two months Mrs. Linton overcame the worst shocks of her brain fever. Then, just as she was well enough to leave her bedroom, a letter came for me from Isabella. She had returned to Wuthering Heights.

It expressed her regret over Catherine's illness and her even greater regret that she could not write to her. She sent affectionate messages to her brother, saying that she wished she could come to Thrushcroft Grange in person to express them. The next part of her letter was written for my eyes alone and told of her marriage to Heathcliff which had proved, as we all knew it would, to be the bitterest of disappointments. She spoke of his cruelty to her, of the uncouth treatment she received at the hands of Hareton and the servants at Wuthering Heights, and of the terrible state of dirt and decay into which the house had fallen. It ended with the telling words—I do hate him—I am wretched—I have been a fool! I shall expect you every day. Don't disappoint me.

As soon as I had perused this epistle I went to the master and informed him that his sister had arrived at the Heights and sent a letter expressing her sorrow for Mrs. Linton's situation and her ardent desire to see him, with a wish that he should as early as possible, transmit to her by me, some token of his forgiveness.

"Forgiveness!" said Linton. "I have nothing to forgive her, Ellen. You may call at Wuthering Heights this afternoon if you like, and say that I am not angry, but that I am sorry to have lost her. Should she really wish to oblige me, let her persuade the villain she has married to leave the country."

"And won't you write her a little note, sir?" I asked imploringly.

"No," he answered. "It is needless. My communication with Heathcliff's family shall be as sparing as his with mine. It shall not exist."

Mr. Edgar's coldness depressed me exceedingly, but it was nothing to the depression that waited for me at Wuthering Heights. I found the house even worse than Isabella had led me to expect from her letter, and she herself even more shockingly changed. Her pretty face was wan and her hair uncurled. Her dress was soiled and crumpled. The hatred she felt for Heathcliff was clear to see. He was bent, he explained, on making her loathe him to extremity, but would stay within the bounds of the law so that she might not seek a legal separation. Before I left he persuaded me to carry a note from him to Catherine, which I refused to do at first, but seeing that until I agreed he would not let me return to Thrushcroft Grange, I took it with me when I left.

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The evening after my return from Wuthering Heights, which was Sunday, I gave Mrs. Linton the letter. Mr. Linton was at church, so I considered it safe. On her instructions I admitted Heathcliff, who had waited in the garden. In a stride or two he was at her side and had grasped her in his arms. He neither spoke nor loosed his hold for some minutes, during which he bestowed more kisses than he had ever given in his life before. The same conviction had stricken him as me; she was fated never to recover, she was sure to die.

"Oh, Cathy!" he cried. "How can I bear it? You loved me; then what right had you to leave me?"

"Let me alone," sobbed Catherine. "I am dying. Is that not enough?"

Then they were silent again. Their faces hid against each other and washed with each other's tears. It seemed that



Heathcliff could weep on a great occasion like this. Just then I perceived Mr. Linton passing up the road towards the Kitchen wing.

"For heaven's sake hurry away," cried. "The master is here."

But I was too late for as the two were locked in another desperate embrace Mr. Linton entered the room. He looked for a moment at the scene before him, then sprang at his unbidden guest. What he meant to do I cannot tell, for Heathcliff stopped all demonstrations by placing the lifeless form of Catherine in his arms. With great difficulty we got her to bed, and at twelve that night a child was born to her. A puny, seven months girl. Two hours later the mother died, without ever recovering consciousness. I stole out into the garden as soon as I could, my chief motive being to see Mr. Heathcliff, who I knew was waiting in the garden.

"She is dead," he said as I approached. "Oh, Catherine, you said I killed you. Haunt me then! May you not rest as long as I am living! I cannot live without my soul!"

He dashed his head against the trunk of a tree, and, lifting up his eyes howled—not like a man, but a savage beast. Seeing that it was beyond me to console him, I returned to the house.

The place of Catherine's interment, to the surprise of the villagers, was neither in the chapel under the carved monuments of the Linton's nor yet by the tombs of her relations outside. It was dug on a green slope in the corner of the kirk-yard, where the wall is so low that the heath and bilberry plants have climbed over it from the moor, and the peat mould almost buries it.

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The Friday of the funeral was the last of the fine days that month. On the Saturday the weather broke and the rain came down in torrents. As I was sitting alone in the parlour, the master having retired, Mrs. Heathcliff burst into the room. Her hair streamed to her shoulders, dripping with snow and water. Her frock was of light silk, and clung to her with wet. Her feet were only protected by light slippers. She told me, when she had given over her hysterical laughter, that she had

escaped from Wuthering Heights while Hindley and Heathcliff were fighting, the former having made up his mind to kill Heathcliff that night.

"I would have stayed," she cried "till I had seen him completely demolished, had I thought Hindley able to do it."

She would stay only long enough to change her dress and collect some clothes from the wardrobe, and then, having ordered the carriage, she was off and away, never to revisit the neighbourhood. A regular correspondence was established between her and my master when things were more settled. I believe her new abode was in the south, near London; there she had a son born, a few months after her escape. He was christened Linton, and from the first seemed to be a peevish, ailing creature.

Mr. Heathcliff, meeting me one day in the village, enquired where she lived. Though I would give no information he discovered from the servants where she lived and of the existence of the child. On hearing its name, he smiled and observed:

"They wish me to hate it, too, do they?"

"I don't think they wish you to know anything about it," I answered.

"But I'll have it when I want it," he said. "They may reckon on that."

Fortunately its mother died before this time arrived, when Linton was twelve, or a little more.

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The twelve years, continued Mrs. Dean, following that dismal period were the happiest of my life, marred only momentarily by the death of Hindley Earnshaw and the discovery that Hareton, his son, who should be the first gentleman of the neighbourhood, was reduced to a state of complete dependence on Heathcliff, his father's inveterate enemy, to whom the entire estate was mortgaged.

For the rest both my and Mr. Linton's whole concern was little Catherine. By the time she was thirteen she was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house—a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaw's dark eyes, but the Linton's fair skin and yellow hair.

I said that Mrs. Heathcliff lived about a dozen years after her quitting her husband. About this time she wrote to her brother saying that she feared the conclusion of her life and begging him to come and visit her so that she might deliver Linton into his hands. He left at once and was away three weeks before he returned with Catherine's new cousin.

A letter edged with black announced the day of my master's return. Catherine was beside herself with excitement at the thought of seeing her cousin and as soon as the carriage was sighted, bade me go with her to meet it.

Linton Heathcliff was a frail, very sickly boy, with fairer hair than Catherine. His journey had tired him very much, and he was very tearful and fretful. While we were at supper Joseph arrived with a message from Mr. Heathcliff demanding that his son be given at once into his keeping. Mr. Linton explained that the boy was exhausted and would be sent to Wuthering Heights on the morrow.

Consequently, as soon as it was light I was dispatched with the weeping boy to his father's house. Catherine was saddened to lose her cousin so soon. As it transpired, she was not to see him again till she had reached the age of sixteen.

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The 20th of March was a beautiful Spring day and Catherine and myself were walking on the moors. We walked over the boundaries of the Grange land, on to that of Wuthering Heights, and as ill luck would have it we fell in with Mr. Heathcliff. He persuaded Catherine to go back with him to the house and I did my best to prevent it, but in vain. As we walked I turned to him.

"Mr. Heathcliff," I said. "It is very wrong. You know you mean no good from this visit."

"I want her to see Linton," he answered. "He's looking better to-day, and it's not often he's fit to be seen. My design is as honest as possible. It is that the two cousins should fall in love and get married."

"If Linton died," I answered. "Then Catherine would be the heir."

"No, she would not," he said. "There is no clause in the

will to secure it. His property would go to me. That is why I desire their union and am resolved to bring it about."

Catherine was overjoyed at the reunion with her cousin, and he, although too apathetic to show much feeling, seemed for his part as well pleased as she. On the way home I told her that she must say nothing of her visit to the Heights to her father, for he and Heathcliff were enemies on account of the latter's treatment of his sister. To my chagrin, however, the whole story came out the next day. My master perceiving that she would not take his word for her uncle-in-law's evil disposition gave her a hasty sketch of his conduct to Isabella. She appeared so deeply impressed and shocked, that Mr. Linton deemed it unnecessary to pursue the subject. He merely added:

"You will know hereafter, darling, why I wish you to avoid this house and family."

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Some time after this I noticed that there was a drawer in her room in which Catherine took particular interest. One day I surprised her at it, and found it to contain letters. They were love letters from Linton Heathcliff. Childish in their style, but none the less, love letters. I made her, on threat of revealing all to her father, promise to discontinue the correspondence, which, in the end she agreed to do.

All went on as before at Thrushcroft Grange until Michaelmas. Then, Mr. Linton having caught a bad cold which had settled obstinately on his lungs, Catherine and myself were walking alone in the park. We had reached the wall, and she, seeing some hips growing over the top of it, climbed up to pick them. In doing so she lost her bonnet, and before I could stop her, jumped over to retrieve it. To my horror I heard her addressed by none other than Mr. Heathcliff. He told her that Linton was ill, dying in fact, and much upset by her desertion of him. I tried to dissuade her from listening, but it was useless. My wilful mistress insisted that at least she should go to see her cousin and tell him that it was not her fault that she had deserted him. The next day saw me on the road to Wuthering Heights with her.

On the day after I was laid low by cold which kept me

from my duties some three weeks. My little mistress attended me most lovingly, only leaving my sick bed when she went to that of her father. In the evenings before she went to her room, she would visit me, and I was unsuspecting of anything until one night when I left my room without warning her of my intention, I found her nowhere in the house. I waited for her, and at half-past eight she returned. I forced from her a confession that she had been to Wuthering Heights, that night, and indeed every night since my illness. She asked that I should not tell her father. I did, however, and in the end Catherine heard that her secret visits were to end. In vain she wept and writhed against the interdiction and implored her father to have pity on Linton. All she got to comfort her was a promise that he would write to Linton and give him leave to come to the Grange whenever he pleased, but explaining that he must no longer expect to see Catherine at Wuthering Heights.

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"These things happened last Winter, sir," said Mrs. Dean. "Hardly more than a year ago." At length Linton, being often too unwell, to leave his home for long, my master gave his consent to the cousins meeting on the moors, provided that Catherine never entered Wuthering Heights. As Spring advanced my master's health grew worse, he feared himself, I knew, to be very near the end, and hoped, I think, that his nephew might console his daughter for the loss of himself.

The days glided on, everyone marking its course by the henceforth rapid alteration of Edgar Linton's state. On our next visit to the Heights, Heathcliff met us with his son, and saying that the boy was not well enough to be out of doors, coaxed us, against my will, into the house. Once he had us there he locked the doors, saying that neither of us should leave until my mistress and his son were married. In vain we tried to escape. On the morrow the unhappy pair were married. Catherine was beside herself in her anxiety to see her father, knowing that he was dying. On the fifth morning I made my escape, and rushed to the Grange and straight to my master. He lay an image of sadness and resignation awaiting his death.

"Catherine is coming, dear master," I whispered, and then went on to give him the rest of the intelligence. He trembled, and divined at once the purpose of his enemy. He felt that his will had better be altered, he decided that her fortune should not be left at her disposal, but put in the hands of trustees for her. I dispatched a man to fetch the attorney and went downstairs to wait for him. He delayed his coming until too late, for the wretch was in the pay of Heathcliff.

As I was waiting impatiently for his arrival, Catherine burst into the room, sobbing:

"Oh, Ellen, Ellen—is Papa alive?"

"Yes," I cried. "Yes, my angel, he is. God be thanked you are safe with us again."

I couldn't abide to be present at their meeting. He died blissfully, Mr. Lockwood, kissing her cheek, he murmured:

"I am going to her, and you darling child shall come to us."

He never stirred or spoke again.

* * * * *

The evening of Mr. Linton's funeral, my young lady and I were seated in the library when Mr. Heathcliff came in and bade Catherine go and prepare herself to return to Wuthering Heights. She scornfully withdrew, and I began to beg for Zillah's place at the Heights. He bade me be silent and then, for the first time, allowed himself to look at Mrs. Linton's picture.

"I shall have that at home—not because I need it but—." He turned abruptly to the fire and continued. "I'll tell you what I did yesterday, I got the sexton, who was digging Linton's grave, to remove the earth of her coffin and I opened it. When I saw her face again—it is hers yet, he had hard work to stir me, but he said it would change if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose—not Linton's side—and I bribed the sexton to pull it away when I am laid there and slide mine out too. I'll have it made so, and by the time Linton gets to us he'll not know which is which."

"You are a very wicked man, Mr. Heathcliff!" I exclaimed.
"Were you not ashamed to disturb the dead?"

"I disturbed nobody," he replied. "And I gave some ease to myself."

While we were so occupied Catherine entered. "Goodbye, Ellen," she whispered. "And come and see me; don't forget."

"Take care you do no such thing, Mrs. Dean," said her new father. "When I wish to see you, I'll come here. I want none of your prying in my house."

That was the last I saw of my mistress and for news of her I had to rely on Zillah, whom I met in the village.

Soon after that I learned that Mr. Linton Heathcliff had died and Heathcliff seized all his property and that of my mistress as well. Catherine, under Heathcliff's treatment, had become sour and haughty, and no one at the Heights had a kind word to say for her.

At first, on hearing these accounts from Zillah, I determined to leave my situation and take a cottage and get Catherine to live with me. But Heathcliff would as soon permit that as he would set up Hareton in a separate house, and I can see no remedy at present, unless she could marry again, and that scheme is not within my policy to arrange.

Thus ended Mrs. Dean's story. As I am now recovered I propose getting on horseback and riding over to Wuthering Heights to inform my landlord that I propose to spend the next six months in London and that he may look for another tenant to take the place after October. I would not pass another Winter here for much.

* * * * *

1802—This September I was invited to devastate the moors of a friend in the North, I unexpectedly found myself within fifteen miles of Ginnerton. A sudden impulse seized me to visit Thrushcroft Grange. Arriving there I found a strange housekeeper in charge. She told me that Mrs. Dean was now at Wuthering Heights so, after asking her to prepare a room for me for that night, I set off there.

As I crossed the yard I heard Catherine Heathcliff's voice. "*Contrary*," said she in a voice as sweet as a bell. "That's for the third time, you dunce."

"*Contrary*, then," said Hareton's voice, still deep, but

softened and infinitely refined. I peered in at them. He was respectably dressed and seated at a table with a book before him.

"Now kiss me," he went on "for minding so well."

I passed on to the kitchen and Mrs. Dean. She jumped up as I entered. "Why bless you, Mr. Lockwood, who could think of your returning this way."

"I have come to settle about my rent with your master."

"Oh, then it is with Mrs. Heathcliff you must settle," she observed, "or rather with me, for she has not yet learned to manage her affairs, and I act for her."

I looked surprised.

"Oh! You have not heard that Heathcliff is dead," she continued.

"How long ago?" I exclaimed.

"Three months since." She then told me of the strange decline of her late master and the intimacy that had grown up between Catherine and Hareton since my absence.

"Towards the end," she said, "Mr. Heathcliff's mind appeared distracted, although he spoke reasonably enough. He could bear neither Catherine nor Hareton in his sight, saying that Hareton's aspect was the ghost of his mortal love and that he and Catherine reminded him that this love did once exist and that he had lost her,

"He took to walking alone at night over the moor and for some days refused his food. I tried to reason with him but he replied: 'It is not my fault that I can neither eat nor rest. My soul's bliss kills my body, for I know that I am near to my heaven.' He solicited the society of no one more and at dusk one night he went to his chamber. He stayed there all the next day and towards evening I saw that his window was swinging open. With another key I entered the room and found my master lying dead in the panelled bed, his face washed with rain which was falling in torrents.

"Of late there are those who speak of having met his ghost on the moors, and Joseph affirms that he has seen Catherine Linton looking out of his window. I know not what to believe, an odd thing happened to me about a month ago. I was going to Thrushcroft Grange when, just at the turn of

the Heights, I encountered a little boy. He was crying terribly. 'What is the matter?' I asked.

" 'There's Heathcliff and a woman under the rocks,' he blubbered. 'And I daren't pass them.'

"I saw nothing. Yet I still don't like being out after dark, and I don't like being alone in this grim house. I shall be glad when Hareton and Catherine marry and we go back to the Grange."

"And who will live here?" I asked.

"Why Joseph will take care of the house with perhaps a lad to keep him company. They will live in the kitchen. The rest of the house will be shut up."

"For the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it?" I observed.

"No, Mr. Lockwood," said Nelly shaking her head. "I believe the dead are at peace."

* * * * *

My walk to Thrushcroft Grange was lengthened by a walk to the Kirkyard. I sought and soon discovered the three headstones on the slope next the moor—the middle one grey; Edgar Linton's only harmonised by the turf and moss creeping up its foot, Heathcliff's was still bare.

I lingered round them under that benign sky and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

by

CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens (1812-70) was the son of a government clerk. In early life he underwent, as a result of his family's poverty, experiences similar to those depicted in some of his novels and received little education. He became a reporter to the "Morning Chronicle" on debates in the Commons in 1835 and contributed to other periodicals articles subsequently re-published as "Sketches by Boz" (1836). Dickens was one of the greatest of Victorian writers and perhaps of English novelists. "Great Expectations" first appeared in a periodical entitled "All the Year Round" and was published in book form in 1861. It has been filmed and dramatised without losing any of its popularity.

MY Father's name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both nothing more explicit than Pip. So it was that I came to be called Pip.

My parents being dead, I had been brought up 'by hand' by my sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery, the wife of the blacksmith. From the treatment of her husband I supposed that he also was being brought up 'by hand.' As a fellow sufferer I always treated him as a larger species of child.

Ours was the marsh country, and my favourite haunt, a bleak place overgrown with nettles, in actual fact the churchyard. One day as I sat there, beginning to be afraid and to cry a little, I heard a terrible voice cry out:

"Hold your noise or I'll cut your throat."

"D'don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror to the fearful man who appeared. He was all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. He had been soaked and smothered in mud, was lame and cut and torn.

He continued to offer threats as he questioned me.

"Now look here," he said "the question being whether you're to be let live. You know what a file is? You know what wittles is?" I nodded and he went on with his instructions.

"You fail—and your heart and liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate."

After which threat he bid me be gone, which I was indeed glad to do.

* * * * *

"Mrs. Joe's been out on the rampage a dozen times, looking for you Pip," was Joe's welcome to me. "And what's more she's got Tickler with 'er."

At this moment Mrs. Joe herself threw back the door, and, finding an obstruction behind it, applied Tickler to its further investigation.

"Where've you been you young monkey?"

"To the churchyard," I whimpered.

"Churchyard indeed! It's me you'll be driving to the churchyard. Who was it brought you up by hand?"

"You did," I muttered.

"And I'd never do it again!" my sister cried.

Meanwhile she began to prepare tea, and my thoughts strayed to the fugitive on the marshes.

"Hark!" I cried suddenly to Joe. "Was that great guns?"

"Ah!" said Joe. "There's another convict off from the Hulks."

I was too young to know what was meant. But how very much was my terror increased, when my sister told me:

"People are put in the Hulks because they murder!"

Terrified I went to bed, terrified I stayed awake 'till the crack of dawn, when, still terrified I crept downstairs to the pantry. Here I found various scraps and a lovely pork pie, and in the forge I quickly discovered a file.

It was a rainy morning and very damp. As I ran the sighs of the wakening marshes echoed endlessly in my frightened ears, "stop thief! Stop that boy with somebody else's pie!"

I saw the man with his back towards me, and went up and patted him on the shoulder. He turned round—it was yet another, a different convict.

Rushing off I soon found my previous acquaintance, whom I was positively glad to see. As was he to see the food and file.

Voraciously he began to eat, and after a while I told him of my encounter with the other convict.

"Where?" he cried leaping up and catching me by the coat collar. "Did you notice anything about him?" he went on.

"He had a badly bruised face," I murmured. "Here, on the cheek."

At once he let me go, and forgetting about his food even, seized the file. All the time he worked on his chains, he was muttering:

"I'll pull him down, the Warmint! Like a bloodhound I will!"

But I, once more terrified, ran off home.

* * * * *

Arrived there I was relieved to find that my robbery had not been discovered. My sister was cleaning the house. She had an art of making her cleanliness more unacceptable than dirt itself. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, and some people do the same by their religion.

This morning—Christmas day it was—my sister was going to church vicariously; that is Joe and I were going. We found company assembled on our return—Mr. Wopsle, Mr. and Mrs. Hubble and Uncle Pumblechook. The conversation turned on sermons. The subject of that day's homily was considered ill-chosen.

"There's plenty of subjects going about," said Uncle Pumblechook. "If you want a subject, look at Pork! Swine were the companions of the Prodigal. The gluttony of swine is put before us, as an example to the young!"

"You listen to this," my sister hissed at me.

At this distinguished level the conversation continued. When suddenly my sister mentioned the 'piece de resistance' of her meal—the Pork Pie I had stolen!

Whether I actually cried out in my alarm, I am not certain. Anyway I jumped down and ran for my life to the door—straight into the arms of a file of soldiers.

This apparition caused consternation to the party. Mrs Joe returning empty-handed from the pantry, lamenting her pie, stopped short and stared.

"Excuse me ladies and gentlemen," said the sergeant. 'I am on a chase in the name of the King and I want the blacksmith.'

"And what might you want with him?" retorted my sister.

"Missis, speaking for myself, I should reply the honour and pleasure of his wife's acquaintance; speaking for the King, I answer, a job done."

Apparently a pair of handcuffs needed mending, and while Joe worked at his job, the sergeant told the company about the escapes of the convicts.

Curiosity persuaded Mrs. Joe to allow her husband and I to accompany the soldiers in their hunt. Stealthily we advanced through the dusk and drizzle of that dismal wilderness, the churchyard looming ghostly to our right, and an eerie gibbet suddenly discernible to the left.

Then the silence was shattered by a loud cry. One voice could be heard screaming "Murder! Murder!" and another "Guards! This way for the runaway convicts."

Water was splashing, mud flying and oaths being sworn.

"Mind, I took him, I give him up to you," I heard my convict cry. "I prevented him escaping. I dragged him back."

"He tried to murder me," screamed the other felon.

But the sergeant took no notice, and the march back to the Hulks was ordered. Just as they were about to embark my convict stopped. He did not look at me but I knew I had been observed by him.

"I wish to say something," he began. "To prevent some persons laying under suspicion alonger me. I took some wittles up at the village over yonder—from the blacksmiths."

Then he turned and continued his trek back to the Hulks, which lay dark mouldering masses off shore, cribbed and barred by massive chains like the prisoners themselves.

* * * * *

Relieved as I was to be thus exonerated, it took time before my conscience was clear of my misdeed. Meanwhile I was 'Pompeyed' (pampered) by doing any odd job required, and by receiving some form of education.

My first efforts at writing were as follows:

"MY DEER JO I OPE U R KRWITE WELL I OPE I
SHALL SON B HABELL 4 2 TEEDGE U JO AN THEN
WE SHORL B SO GLOOD AN WEN I'M PRENGTD
2 U JO WOT LARX INF XN PIP"

Luckily Joe alone saw this, and when I had explained it to him, he entreated me to try and teach him. However, he had wisdom enough to suggest that it were better to keep the matter secret from his wife. At this moment Uncle Pumblechook's cart was heard approaching, bringing Mrs. Joe back from the market.

"Now," said Mrs. Joe as she unwrapped herself, "if this boy ain't grateful this night, he never will be! It's only to be hoped he won't be pompeyed."

"She ain't in that line, mum," said Uncle Pumblechook.

"She?" Joe muttered in bewilderment. And we were snappishly informed that 'she' was Miss Havisham, a rich and eccentric recluse, who lived nearby, and who had asked my uncle to find a boy to 'play.'

"And he had better play or I'll work him," cried my sister, and she then pounced on me and soaped me and towelled and kneaded me 'till I was quite beside myself. Finally I was bundled into the cart and driven off to spend the night with Mr. Pumblechook.

* * * * *

It was to a dismal brick house that I was next day conducted. Some windows were barred, some bricked in; the yard was unweeded and the out-buildings in a state of collapse.

A young girl answered my uncle's ring. Him she dismissed peremptorily; and me she conducted to the house. She hardly spoke, and when she did it was contemptuously, prefacing each remark with a disdainful 'Boy!' Yet she cannot have been older than I.

At last we came to a large door.

"Go in," she commanded and disappeared.

Trembling, I knocked and was told to enter. It was a large fine room lit by candles, for the daylight was excluded. Prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking glass, before which sat a lady dressed richly in satin and lace and silk,

but all in white. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on. Around lay half packed trunks and a jewel case open.

Then I saw what should be white, had been white long ago. I saw that the bride, too, had withered like the dress. The dress which had been put on the rounded figure of a young girl, now hung loose draping but skin and bone. There was no brightness left but the brightness of her eyes.

"Look at me," the lady said. "You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?"

"No," I murmured.

"Do you know what I touch here?" she said laying her hand on her heart.

I nodded.

Then emphasised with an eager look and a boastful weird smile, she uttered the one word:

"Broken."

After a pause she continued:

"I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play—go on play, play, play!" but I naturally found it impossible.

"Call Estella," she cried, and when the young girl appeared, she ordered:

"Let me see you play cards with this boy."

"With this boy!" Estella exclaimed. "Why he is a common labouring boy."

Then I thought I heard Miss Havisham whisper: "Well? You can break his heart!"

So we played. Needless to say I lost, for Estella taunted me continually with my coarse appearance and speech. Till, when I was finally allowed to retire, I was almost in tears. As she let me out of the gate Estella asked suddenly:

"Why don't you cry?"

"Because I don't want to," I attempted boldly.

"You do," she retorted. "You've been crying 'till you're half blind, and you're near crying now."

Her contemptuous laugh followed me as I ran home.

* * * * *

No sooner had I arrived at the forge than I began to be beset with questions as to my experiences, by my sister and

Uncle Pumblechook. These took so violent a form on Mrs. Joe's part that even Uncle Pumblechook remonstrated with her.

"Boy! What like is Miss Havisham?" he began.

"Very tall and dark," I retorted in obstinacy.

Mr. Pumblechook winked assent, from which I was interested to discover that he had never seen her.

"What was she doing of?"

"She was sitting in a black velvet coach, while her niece handed her in cake and wine on gold plate," I said frantically.

"It's her sedan chair," said Uncle. "She's very flighty, you know."

"What did you play at?" asked my sister.

"Flags," I cried, now encouraged. "Estella waved a blue one, and I a red, and Miss Havisham one sprinkled over with little gold stars."

Then Joe came in and was told these happenings, and then I immediately felt ashamed. So that later in the forge I confessed to Joe my untruths. I tried to excuse them by confessing my shame at the realisation of my commonness, which Estella had made so clear to me.

"As to being common, I don't make it out at all clear. You're uncommon small; likewise you're an uncommon scholar," said the faithful Joe. "But lies is lies. That ain't the way to get out of being common. Whether common ones," pursued he, reflectively, "mightn't be better to keep company with common ones." And honest Joe paused again. "I feel a sincere well-wisher would advise, dear Pip, them being dropped into your prayers when you go upstairs to bed."

Shame, and deep affection for Joe made my prayers sincere that night, nevertheless another shame made me remember, during the ensuing days, Estella's scorn.

* * * * *

This shame made me more assiduous at school. And it was returning thence that I remembered one evening my sister's instructions to pick up Joe at the "Jolly Bargeman." I found him with a stranger. He was a queer looking fellow, with his head all on one side, and one eye half shut as if he were taking aim with an invisible gun. He conversed heartily with Joe, buying him a rum and water, and frequently his conversation

turned on me. When the drinks were brought Joe stirred his with the spoon provided, but the stranger then fired that invisible shot he appeared to have been so long contemplating. It was not verbal. It was in dumb show. For he stirred his drink with a file—Joe's file, the one I had given to the convict.

Then he got up to take his leave, saying as he said goodbye:

"Here's a bright new shilling for the boy," and wrapped it in paper to give it me.

It was Mrs. Joe who discovered on our return, that the wrapping paper consisted of two one pound notes!

* * * * *

Soon after this occurrence I was summoned to another visit at Miss Havisham's. Estella again let me in—I cannot say 'welcomed' me. She put me in a ground floor room where I found three strangers, none of whom took any notice of me.

"Poor dear soul," said one. "No one's enemy but her own."

"T'would be more commendable to be someone else's," said a second.

"We are to love our neighbours, Cousin Raymond,"

"If a man is not his own neighbour, who is?" was the reply.

Then Estella called me away. On our way up to Miss Havisham we met a most dignified gentleman descending the staircase.

"So, the days have worn by," Miss Havisham greeted me. "Are you willing to play, boy? No? Then are you willing to work?" she paused as I nodded. "Then go into the opposite room."

This room, too, was as fine as the other, as decrepit, and also lit by candles.

"This," she said pointing to a table prepared long since for a banquet, and now covered in cobwebs, "is where I will be laid when I'm dead! And what do you think that is?—my bridal cake!" Then she paused and glared round the room.

"Come, come, come! Walk me, walk me!"

This I soon saw was my work, to act as a live crutch.

Estella was then summoned and commanded to bring up the three strangers.

"How well you look!" said one.

"I do not. I'm yellow skin and bone," Miss Havisham replied.

"I have habitually thought of you," said another.

"Then don't!" retorted Miss Havisham.

"There's Matthew," said the third, "never coming to see how our dear cousin is."

"Matthew will come and see me at last," said Miss Havisham "when I am laid on that table, and he will stand here, you there, you there and you there," pointing at each and striking the table at each command. "Now, you know your places, so go, go, go!"

"Now, walk me, walk me!" she ordered me and so we continued until her relations had gone. Then I played cards with Estella as on the previous occasion.

Two more occurrences happened before I quitted the manor that day. First, a meeting with a young man of my own age, whom no sooner had I seen than he insisted on my boxing with him. His physique was so little but his spirit such that I felt ashamed when I knocked him down. Secondly, just as I was leaving, I saw Estella beckoning me.

"You may kiss me if you like," she said.

I did. But I felt that it was given to a coarse common boy, as might have been a piece of money.

More frequent now grew my visits. I would push Miss Havisham round and round her rooms in a wheel chair. I had to play cards with Estella, while Miss Havisham would whisper to me:

"She grows prettier and prettier, does she not Pip?" and it was true.

While to Estella she seemed to be saying:

"Break their hearts my pride, break their hearts and show no mercy."

Meanwhile I became aware of the interest which the frequency of these visits occasioned in the minds of my sister and Uncle Pumblechook. It became evident to me that they expected some marvellous good fortune to accrue from them.

Imagine their joy then, when Miss Havisham made a present

of £25, as a premium to my being bound as an apprentice to Joe.

* * * * *

It is a most miserable thing to feel ashamed of home. But such I now was. Having longed to become Joe's apprentice, I now felt no pride in it. Still, this shame led me to spend my every leisure hour in endeavouring to increase my learning. Joe and I used to go out secretly to the battery to study together. If he learnt nothing, his company was a great comfort. One day I confessed to him a desire to go and see Miss Havisham again. It was a year since I had been there.

"If you would give me a half-day, Joe?" I asked, "I think I will make a call on Miss Est— Havisham," I corrected myself.

Joe did not appear to notice my slip. Still he counselled me not to go and see her, for fear she might imagine I was expecting another gift. However, he granted me a holiday, much to the annoyance of his other apprentice, Dolge Orlick, who immediately demanded one for himself, which in his fairness Joe felt bound to allow. But not so reasonable did his wife consider it.

"You're a fool to waste wages like that," she cried, and turning to Orlick "I wish I was your master!"

"You'd be everybody's master if you durst," retorted he.

This inevitably produced a quarrel, in which Joe was reluctantly forced to fight his wife's battle. Luckily each having suffered a blow, and Orlick's the most severe, Mrs. Joe fainted and peace was restored.

"On the rampage, Pip, and off the rampage—such is life," was Joe's philosophic observation, as I departed towards Miss Havisham's. But there I soon discovered the absence of Estella, and after a short conversation I left, having promised to return once a year.

As I approached the "Jolly Bargeman" I ran into Orlick who told me that some more convicts had escaped. We were discussing this as we passed the inn. Here we were surprised to notice considerable commotion.

"There's something wrong at the Blacksmith's," someone

shouted. "Someone been attacked when Gargery was out. Convicts I reckon."

I dashed home to find the house full of people, a surgeon and a bewildered Joe. My sister was lying senseless on the floor, destined never to be on the rampage again. Lying by her side was a convict's leg iron, one which had obviously been long ago sawn off.

Someone being needed to look after my sister, Biddy, a young great niece of Mr. Woppsle, came to live with us. She and I became great friends and fellow students. Unhampered now by my sister, and able to buy books with my annual guinea from Miss Havisham, which she gave me at each visit.

"Biddy," I said to her one day, "I want to be a gentleman."

Then I told her why, of Estella's remarks and my shame.

"Is it to spite her or to gain her over?" she asked quickly, and endeavoured to persuade me gently of my folly. But my mind was made up.

As we walked towards the forge, Orlick followed us. Biddy was obviously upset and confessed his unwelcome attentions to her. This made me dislike him the more.

* * * * *

Joe and I were seated one day in the "Jolly Bargeman" when we became aware of a strange gentleman. He had been conversing awhile with Mr. Woppsle, when we suddenly heard him ask for Joe and myself. We therefore declared ourselves. Then it was I recognised him as the stranger whom I had once met on the stairs at Miss Havisham's. He told us his name was Jaggers and that he was a lawyer. Then, informing us that he was the bearer of a message from a third party, he said:

"The message I have for this young man is that he has Great Expectations."

He paused as Joe and I gasped in amazement. "Further, that he will come into a handsome property, the present owner of which is desirous that he should be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and brought up as a gentleman."

So my dream had come true! I could hardly believe the lawyer's words, but true it was. There were two stipulations: firstly that I was to be known as Mr. Pip, and secondly that I must never inquire as to the identity of my benefactor who would himself inform me personally when he thought fit. I was to leave in a week, meanwhile he gave me £20 to fit myself out respectably. As tutor I was to have a certain Mr. Matthew Pocket, whose name I recollected having heard mentioned at Miss Havisham's. Mr. Jaggers himself was to be my guardian. Finally he again warned me that I must not ever disclose any suspicions even, that I might have as to the identity of my benefactor.

Nothing could have been more sweet or gentle than the behaviour of Joe and Biddy towards me. It was I, not they, who was not at my ease. Already even I must confess I felt ashamed of Joe's uncouthness, going so far as to impress on Biddy the necessity of preparing him for the change in his life I eventually would make. She, however, rebuked me and suggested that Joe was certainly content to do that job in which he could take pride, knowing that he did it well. I am ashamed to confess I thought her merely envious of my future. Nor was I unaware of the changed attitude towards me of such as Mr. Pumblechook, and I was very pleased at it.

As soon as my suit was ready I paid a visit to Miss Havisham.

"I start for London, Miss Havisham, to-morrow." I was exceedingly careful what I said. "I hoped you would kindly not mind my taking leave of you."

"This is a gay figure, Pip," and waved her crutch at my suit, as if she was a fairy godmother, who had changed me, and were bestowing the finishing gift.

"I have come into such good fortune," I murmured. "And I am so grateful for it."

Miss Havisham gave a look of delight at the discomfited Sarah Pocket, who was her companion while Estella was away. When she stretched out her hand to say goodbye, I went down on my knee and put it to my lips.

Very tender was my parting from Joe and Biddy. Yet sad as I was, I could not but be excited. As I walked away from the forge, I was surprised to find the parting so easy, yet in the

coach, being born relentlessly away from all those dear to me, indeed from the whole of my previous experiences, I felt very homesick.

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I was surprised at my first sight of Mr. Jaggers's office. It was a dim, dirty room, the most noticeable objects in it being two horrible casts of hideous swollen faces. As he was not in when I arrived I had gone out for a walk, during which I met him surrounded by several miserable wretches who were obviously importuning him.

"Why do you come here?" he demanded of one.

"My bill, sir."

"Have you paid Wemmick?" he asked. "Then if so, be off with you and don't come bothering me or I might let it slip through my fingers."

Then an old Jew pestered him.

"Mithter Jaggerth. I hoffer hany termth if you'd have the condethenthum to be bought off from t'other thide."

But my guardian scornfully threw him off. In the office he was met by yet another greasy individual.

"Arter a deal of trouble, I've found one sir."

"What is he prepared to swear?"

"Well, mas'r Jaggers, in a general way, anythink."

Once more with a 'blundering booby' Mr. Jaggers dismissed him, and led me into his room to inform me what was to be my allowance. It was very liberal, and to tell me that I was to lodge for a night or two in the rooms of Mr. Matthew Pocket's son.

Wemmick, the clerk, then conducted me to them.

"So you never were in London afore?" he asked.

"Is it a very wicked place?"

"You may get cheated, robbed and murdered in London. But then there are plenty of people anywhere, who'll do that for you," was his cheerful reply.

It was a long walk to Barnard's Inn where Herbert Pocket lived—for that apparently was his name. Nor, when we got there, was the appearance of it in the least welcoming. There was a notice on the door saying 'Back shortly.' So Wemmick

left me, and I awaited Mr. Pocket. After half-an-hour he arrived, and who should it be but the young man I had knocked out in Miss Havisham's garden!

"Well," he said good humorously, "I hope you've forgiven me for knocking you about so."

From which I saw that he still confounded his intention with his execution!

"You hadn't come into your good fortune then?" he asked. "I myself was on the look out for my good fortune at that time."

"Indeed," I said.

"Yes, Miss Havisham had sent to see if she could take a fancy to me. But she couldn't. Otherwise," he went on good humorously, "I suppose I should have been provided for and what's-it-named to Estella. She's a tartar!" he concluded.

"You mean Miss Havisham?"

"No. Estella. She's hard and haughty and has been brought up by Miss Havisham to wreak revenge on the male sex."

"What relation is she to Miss Havisham?" I asked.

"And why should she wreak revenge?"

"Don't you know the story? However, it shall be saved for dinner time."

He then set about his preparations. Although he was not handsome, he was so pleasant and wore his old clothes with such an air that I felt no shame in asking him to put me right socially, whenever he saw me at a loss or going wrong. He agreed kindly and requested me to call him by his Christian name, so did I likewise request him.

"Philip?" he said. "It's too moral. It's like a boy so lazy that he fell into a pond, or so fat he couldn't see out of his eyes, or so avaricious that he locked up his cake 'till the mice eat it. I tell you what—we're so harmonious and you've been a blacksmith, I'll call you Handel! You know his 'Harmonious Blacksmith'?"

I didn't, but agreed to the name. Then, as we were now sat down to dinner, I reminded him of his promise to tell me about Miss Havisham.

"Certainly, Handel," he replied. "But first let me advise you that it is not the custom in London to put the knife in the

mouth—for fear of accidents—and while the fork is reserved for that use, it is not put further in than necessary. It's scarcely worth mentioning, but it's as well to do as other people do."

He was so friendly that we both laughed and I scarcely blushed.

"Now, concerning Miss Havisham. She was the spoilt child of a wealthy widower—a brewer and very proud. For while a gentleman may not keep a public house, several public houses may keep him."

"Was Miss Havisham an only child?" I asked.

"No, she had a half-brother. In old age her father married again privately—his cook, I rather believe. The son of this marriage turned out riotous and undutiful, so he was left infinitely less well off than Miss Havisham." He paused and requested me to have some more wine. "Excuse my mentioning it, but society does not expect one to be so conscientious in emptying one's glass, as to turn it bottom upwards with the rim on one's nose."

Then he completed the tale, which I had already suspected.

Namely, that she had fallen in love with a blackguard who had, at the very last moment, deserted her. But he added what I did not, of course, know, that her fiancé had extracted large sums from her before the marriage, and that the whole had been a conspiracy between him and Miss Havisham's half-brother.

Of Estella he knew nothing, save that she was no relation to the old lady, but adopted.

Herbert Pocket then talked of himself, and though he described himself as a 'capitalist—in the shipping line,' I soon comprehended that this was his intention and not yet in any way carried through.

A few days later he took me to call on his family, whom I found to be as good-natured and impractical as he was himself. His mother had been brought up to be ornamental rather than useful, and succeeded in so being. His father made his living now by taking in young men as boarders and to 'read' them. Such a boarder I was now to become.

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My fellow boarders were Bentley Drummle, a sulky fellow who took up a book as if the writer had done him an injury

nor did he take up an acquaintance in any more agreeable a spirit, and Startop, who had been spoilt by a doting mother whom he adored as well as resembled. Thus it was that Herbert became my most frequent companion, so that I decided to keep my room in his apartment at Barnard's Inn. Between him and his father, who was a most conscientious tutor, I began to make considerable advance in learning and social behaviour.

I had no difficulty in persuading my guardian to give me £20 with which to furnish my rooms and Herbert's, though his manner as always was peculiar.

"He's deep," said Wemmick, "as Australia. Always seems to me as if he'd set a man-trap and was watching it."

Wemmick then went on to show me round the office. I was not surprised to discover that the two masks I had so wondered at, were those of two famous murderers.

"Got us a world of credit," said Wemmick, then he asked me if I had yet dined at Mr. Jaggers.

"When you go," he said "take a good look at his house-keeper. Not so very common—a wild beast tamed!" He paused a moment. "I'll tell you another thing about him. He never lets a door or window be fastened at night. 'I want to see the man who'd dare rob me,' he says. Ay, he's a deep one, he is."

While we were on the subject of dinner, Wemmick asked me if I'd go down to his 'property' at Walworth for dinner one night.

"You don't object to an Aged Parent, I hope," he said. I naturally said I'd be delighted to dine, and meet his father.

It was the quaintest little gothic cottage, complete with flagpole, drawbridge and gun.

"At nine o'clock every night the gun fires. And when you hear him you'll agree he's a Stinger." Wemmick was inordinately proud of his miniature estate.

Inside the Castle we found by the fire a very old man in a flannel coat, clean, cheerful and well-cared for, but immensely deaf.

"Here's Mr. Pip, Aged Parent," introduced Wemmick. "Nod away at him, Mr. Pip; that's what he likes."

And it was. Not one word could he hear, but was utterly content if he was heartily nodded at, and heartily he nodded

back! Now the time had come to fire Stinger. The Aged Parent busied himself with heating the poker—then sitting excitedly forward in his chair and holding tight on to the arms he waited. There was a bang so that every cup, glass and board in the crazy cottage shook.

"He's fired, I heard him," the old man cried exultingly, and I nodded at him until I was dizzy.

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As a contrast to this dinner, I was invited to dine a few days later with my guardian. He invited also Herbert, Sartop and Bentley Drummle. His house was large but uncared for, the furniture useful and comfortable rather than beautiful. To my surprise he was chiefly interested in meeting Drummle. Throughout the meal my guardian encouraged him to talk and drew him out repeatedly. Indeed, he drew us all out, and always seemed to manage to draw out the most unpleasant side of our characters.

Following Wemmick's advice I took notice of the house-keeper. She was a tall, pale, mysterious looking woman of about forty, who seemed to be kept by my guardian in a permanent state of suspense. At the end of the meal, the conversation happening to have taken up the subject of physical prowess, we were all baring and spanning our arms in a ridiculous manner, when suddenly Mr. Jaggers seized his housekeeper's wrist as she cleared the table.

"Molly," he ordered. "Let them see your wrist. There's power here," he continued. "Very few men have the power of wrist this woman has. Come, let them see both your wrists."

And very reluctantly she did so. One of them was deeply scarred across and across.

"That'll do, Molly," my guardian said. "You have been admired."

Then he set to make us drink, and incited us so that we all but came to blows.

"I like that Spider," he said referring to Drummle.

"I'm glad, sir, though I'm afraid I don't," I replied.

"No, no, don't have too much to do with him," he advised.

"Still, I like the fellow. Why, if I was a fortune teller——"

and he paused. "But then I'm not a fortune teller, am I Pip?" and with this mysterious remark he bade me good-night.

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It was not long after this party that I received a letter from Biddy to say that Joe was coming up to London, with Mr. Wopsle, and would be calling on me at Barnard's Inn. It was, I fear, with mixed feelings that I awaited him, glad that only Herbert would see him and that Drummle would not. Are not all our worst meannesses committed for the sake of those whom we most despise?

"Which you have growed," said Joe on arrival, "and that swelled and that gentlefolked!"

He told me that all my friends and acquaintances were well and flourishing, except poor Wopsle who 'had had a drop,' having descended from being Churchwarden to being an actor. And he described in detail that poor gentleman's misfortunes. While he spoke he had left his hat on the edge of the chimney-piece, again and again it fell off, so Joe was forced to make extraordinary play with it, showing the greatest skill, as he rushed at it and neatly caught it every time it showed signs of falling. Finally, I took it away from him and he disclosed the purpose of his visit. He had had a message from Uncle Pumblechook that Miss Havisham wished to see him.

"So I goes off to see Miss A."

"Miss A.?" I asked. "Miss Havisham you mean."

"And Miss A.," he continued, "says to me 'would you tell Mr. Pip that which Estella has come home, and would be glad to see him.' " And Joe then rose from his chair to take his leave, which luckily covered my embarrassment. I pressed him to stay, but he would not.

"Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings and divisions. You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor anywheres else but what is private and bekknown among friends. I'm wrong out of the forge and off the marshes. So God bless you, dear old Pip, old chap, God bless you!" and with this simple dignity he left.

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The most extraordinary coincidence made my journey to Miss Havisham's a most unpleasant experience. At that time convicts were customarily transported to the Hulks in the public stage coaches. As luck would have it the one on which I travelled was burdened with four of them. One of whom I instantly recognised as the stranger I had seen many years ago in the "Jolly Bargemen," and who had 'shot' at me with the file before presenting me with the silver piece wrapped in two pound notes. Imagine my consternation at so unfortunate a coincidence, but it was as nothing to my surprise when I happened to overhear their conversation. For from it, I learnt that those two pound notes were a present to me from the convict whom I had fed on the marshes! I was so alarmed, although confident that my changed appearance would effectually disguise my identity, that I descended from the coach at the first sign of the town.

The next morning I was up betimes and soon arrived at Miss Havisham's. I was amazed to discover Orlick installed as porter there.

"Are you here for good?" I cried.

"I ain't here for harm," he growled.

But of that I was by no means sure. However, I entered and ascended the stairs to the door of Miss Havisham's room.

"Pip's rap," I heard her say. "Come in, Pip."

I entered to find her in exactly the same position before the dressing table as I had last seen her. With her was an elegant young lady whom I imagined I had never seen before.

"I heard Miss Havisham," said I rather at a loss "that you were so kind as to wish me to come and see you."

"Well?" she said.

Then the young lady lifted her eyes, they were Estella's eyes. After a few minutes' conversation she and I were dismissed to take a walk.

"I must have been a singular little creature to hide and see the fight that day," she said. "I enjoyed it very much."

"You rewarded me very much," I replied, and went on to tell her that Herbert and I were now good friends.

"No doubt, since your change of fortune," she went on, "you have changed your companions. For what was fit company for you once, would no longer be so," and as she

spoke, all lingering intention of visiting Joe left me. May God forgive my meanness.

We talked of old times and I asked her if she remembered having made me cry.

"You must know," she said, "that I have no heart, none at all."

Naturally I denied such a possibility. As she was speaking, repeatedly it seemed to me, that somewhere I had seen a face which resembled hers, but I could not imagine where.

When we returned and I was alone with Miss Havisham, she whispered to me eagerly:

"Is she not beautiful, graceful, well grown?"

And when I admitted that she was, she leant towards me saying: "Love her, love her, love her; I'll tell you what real love is, it is blind devotion, unquestioning self-humiliation, giving up your whole heart and soul to the smiter—as I did."

Then with a wild cry she rose from her chair striking at the air with her crutch.

At this moment Mr. Jaggers entered. I noticed that even Miss Havisham seemed afraid of him, and soon dismissed us to our dinner.

It was not a lively meal, nor was the game of whist which the four of us played afterwards. When Mr. Jaggers and I left, Miss Havisham promised to forewarn me of Estella's arrival in London, whither she was soon to come on an extended visit. Far into the night the old lady's words sounded in my ears, and adapting them for my own repetition, I cried to my pillow:

"I love her, I love her, I love her!"

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I felt it my duty to inform my guardian what knowledge I had of Orlick. Nevertheless, I was somewhat alarmed at his immediate decision to dismiss the fellow. However, I did not argue, but took myself off for a walk, picking up the London coach on the main road, and was soon glad to find myself back in Barnard's Inn.

"My dear Herbert," I began after dinner. "I have something very particular to tell you."

"My dear Handel," he replied. "I shall esteem and respect your confidence."

"It concerns myself, and one other person," I began. "Herbert, I love Estella!"

I was amazed but not displeased when Herbert disclosed that he was already aware of this fact. I began then to explain my worries.

"You are a good fellow," Herbert reassured me "with impetuosity and yet diffidence, active and yet a dreamer. Still be reassured that Mr. Jaggers is not the man to hold his present relations towards you if he were not sure of his ground."

Then Herbert attempted to dissuade me from these feelings towards a girl, whose education he could not but feel had been unfortunate. But he and I knew it was of no use. Then he told me that he, too, loved a girl—Clara by name.

"She is rather below my mother's nonsensical aspirations," he confessed. "Her father was a purser!"

Then, in some way cheered by these mutual self-confidences, we went to see Mr. Wopsle in his play, which worthy we brought home to supper at Barnard's Inn.

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It was not long before I received a formal note from Estella announcing her arrival in London. I was naturally all impatience on the morning of the day she was due, so that I was at the coaching station hours before she could possibly arrive. I happened to meet Wemmick who diverted my anxiety with a visit to Newgate; and a disorderly, depressing scene it was. I could not but consider how strange it was, that I should so often be tainted by my contact with crime and criminals. Then I thought of the beautiful young Estella, proud and refined, and the contrast was abhorrent to me.

Beautiful indeed she looked as I saw her face at the window. Then suddenly that half-recognised resemblance to someone flashed once more before me and was gone.

"I am going to Richmond," she said affably. "I am to have a carriage and you are to take me. Meanwhile, I am to rest and take some tea. Here is my purse and you are to pay the charges out of it. Oh, but you must take the purse! We have no choice, you and I, but to obey instructions!"

"What are you going to do at Richmond?" I asked when we were settled in the Inn.

"I am going to live, at great expense, with a lady who has the power—or says she has—of taking me about and showing people to me, and me to people."

"You speak of yourself as if you were someone else," I said.

"How do you know how I speak of others?" she asked. "But, tell me, how do you thrive with Mr. Pocket?"

"As pleasantly as I could anywhere, away from you," I answered.

"You silly boy!" she said composedly. "However, I hear Mr. Matthew is superior to the rest of his family: for you should know that they beset Miss Havisham with reports and insinuations to your disadvantage."

"I hope you would not be amused if they did me harm?"

"No, no," she said laughing "notwithstanding the proverb that constant dripping will wear away a stone. There's my hand on it."

As she gave it to me, I held it and put it to my lips. She laughed, but I could see that she cared to attract me. So I asked if I might call on her.

"Oh, yes, you are to see me, Pip. You are already mentioned to the family!"

It was the first time she had called me by my name. I realised that she knew I would treasure it up.

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At this time it cannot be said that I was satisfied with my life. I was worried about Estella and I was worried, too, about Herbert. My own extravagances led him on to extravagances also.

"My dear Herbert, we are getting on badly," I would say.

"My dear Handel, those very words were on my lips!"

So we would order something very special for dinner and sit ourselves down with pen and paper.

"We must stare them out of countenance," I'd encourage.

"So I would, Handel, only they are staring one out of countenance!"

Eventually we would get all our bills docketed and put them carefully away, feeling that our affairs were now in focus.

It so happened that we were thus engaged when a letter with a heavy black seal and border was delivered to me. It announced my sister's death. If I could not recollect her with much tenderness, there was a shock of regret. I wrote, therefore, a letter of condolence to Joe, promising to attend the funeral. I found the arrangements in the capable hands of Mr. Trabb.

"Pocket handkerchiefs out, all!" he cried when we had all been tied up into ridiculous black bundles to follow the blind black monster with twelve human legs, which was the coffin and its bearers.

"Biddy," I said when the service was over and the wine drunk by the mourners. "I think you should have written to me about these sad matters."

I asked her about her plans, and she, fearing that I might offer her money, quickly assured me that she had got a place as a schoolmistress.

"I shall often be down here now to see poor Joe," I asserted.

"Are you quite sure that you will?" she asked after a pause.

I was indignant. But yet even then something inside me feared she was right.

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It wasn't long after this sad event that I came of age. As I expected, I was summoned to my guardian's office.

"Well, Pip," he said. "I must call you Mr. Pip to-day. Congratulations, Mr. Pip."

We shook hands and I sat down.

"Now my young friend, I am going to have a word with you," and he paused. "What do you suppose you are living at the rate of?"

I confessed in a somewhat circumlatory manner that I didn't know. This answer seemed agreeable to him. Then he asked me if I had any questions to ask him, so I asked whether I was to discover the identity of my benefactor. He said, no, nor did he know when, adding the curious rider

that when my benefactor did disclose himself, his own part in the business would cease, and further that when the disclosure was made, it would not be necessary for him to know anything about it. Naturally, I was mystified, but did not pursue the matter as he then gave me a bill for £500, and informed me that henceforth I would receive that amount per annum.

As I left I ran into Wemmick. I asked him his advice, saying that I wished to help a friend start his career.

"Pitch your money into the Thames and you know the end of it," he replied. "Serve a friend, and you may make an end of a friendship."

"And that is your deliberate opinion?"

"In this office," he countered.

"Very well then," I said. "I shall look you up at Walworth."

Which I did the very next Sunday, finding Wemmick with the Aged Parent and a Miss Skiffin. Wemmick and I took a walk while I explained my desire to aid Herbert without his knowing it, in order to make some return for the benefits I had received from him and his father.

"Mr. Pip," he said. "This is devilish good of you."

"So you'll help me to do good then?"

"Egad, that's not my trade."

"Nor is this your trading place."

So it was arranged between us. Miss Skiffin's brother, an accountant, found a merchant in need of a little capital, and soon a deal was accomplished. Wemmick pervaded the arrangement throughout, but never appeared in it. Any discussion relating to it took place at Walworth, where I became charmed by Wemmick's untiring and gentle vigilance over his Aged Parent.

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I saw a great deal of Estella, at picnics, balls, fetes and anywhere I possibly could find her. Habitually she would revert to that tone which expressed that the association was forced upon us, then she would check herself and seem to pity me.

"Pip, Pip," she would cry. "Will you never take warning of me?"

One day she told me that she was to visit Miss Havisham,

who had asked her to request my attendance on the journey. The old lady was even more dreadfully fond of Estella than formerly. She hung upon her beauty, her words and her gestures.

"How does she use you, Pip?" she would ask again and again with witch-like eagerness.

Estella endured this fierce affection with impatience at times.

"What, are you tired of me, you ingrate?" Miss Havisham cried when once Estella attempted to disengage herself. "You stock and stone, you cold, cold, heart!"

"Do you reproach me for being cold? You? I am what you made me—take all the success, take all the failure—take me!"

"Look at her!" cried Miss Havisham bitterly. "So hard and thankless on the hearth, where she was reared."

"Mother by adoption," retorted Estella. "I admit I owe you everything. What would you have of me?"

"Love!"

"You ask me to give you, what you never gave me?"

"Did I never give her love, a burning love, inseparable from jealousy at all times?" Miss Havisham turned madly towards me. "Oh, so hard, so hard, so proud, so proud! How, Estella, can you be proud and hard to me?"

Miss Havisham then sank moaning to the ground, whereupon I took the opportunity to leave the room. Neither when I next saw them, nor on any occasion after that, did I ever see a revival of quarrelling between them.

It was during this visit that I reproached Estella for allowing the advances of Bentley Drummle.

"Moths," replied Estella, "hover about a lighted candle. Can the candle help it?"

"I have seen you give him looks and smiles," I said dejectedly, "that you never gave to me."

"Do you want me then to deceive and entrap you?" she asked.

It was not long after this visit that the most fearful blow of my life came upon me. I was sitting alone at home—Herbert being abroad on business—it was a stormy and fearful night, when I heard a step on the stairs outside. The footsteps faltered and I realised the landing lights must have been blown out.

"There is someone down there?" I called, taking a light to the passage. "Pray what is your business?"

"My business. Oh, yes, I'll explain my business by your leave," he replied. "I would like to come in, master."

The sitting room lights showed a burly man, bald and very roughly dressed, who was looking at me with affectionate pleasure.

"There's no one nigh is there?" he asked with concern.

"Why do you, a stranger, coming to my rooms at this time of night, ask that question?" I demanded.

He came towards me, holding out his hands. In my agonised astonishment I gave mine to him. For I knew him, It was my convict of the marshes, to whom I had given the pie and file many years before.

"You acted nobly, my boy. And I have never forgot it."

"If you are grateful," I said coldly. "I hope you have shown it by mending your ways. I have no wish to repulse you, but surely you must understand I can have no wish to renew that chance intercourse. I am glad to think you have repented. So since you are wet and weary, will you drink something before you go?"

He assented, and feeling that I had been somewhat brusque, I asked him about his life. He told me that he had made a fortune in Australia. I then recollected that £2 he had sent me by the stranger and asked him to accept repayment of the money, which now I could afford, since I had come into a property.

"Might a mere warmint," he said as he threw the notes into the fire "ask what property?"

"I don't know," I faltered.

"Might a mere warmint ask whose property?" he went on.

"I don't know," I repeated.

"Could I make a guess," he said slowly "at the first figure of your income since you came of age? Could it be 5? Con-

cerning your guardian. Could the first letter of his name be J?"

The truth, the whole horrible truth flashed over me. This wretch was my benefactor. The room swam round me and I fell on the sofa, while he knelt at my feet.

"Yes, Pip, I made a gentleman of you," he said with absurd pride. Going on to tell how this ambition had inspired him all these years, while I quivered with shame at the realisation of so fearful a connection, of so disgraceful a means of acquiring a fortune. Still dazed, I put him to sleep in Herbert's room—I noticed he placed a pistol by the side of the bed, then I returned to my room to reflect on the shattering of my hopes—Miss Havisham's intentions towards me a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; for this jail-bird to have left Joe and the pure life of the forge.

Still I owed it to him to do what I could for him. He confessed that as one who had been transported to Australia, he would be hanged if found in this country. This was particularly worrying, as I had noticed a furtive stranger near my lodgings the very next morning after his arrival. He told me that his name was Magwitch, but that he had travelled under the name of Provis. I obtained new clothes for him, but the more I attempted to disguise him, more it seemed to me that the convict appeared. Every hour increased my abhorrence of this wretch, whom I so detested, and yet whom, out of gratitude, I was bound to protect.

Herbert soon returned. Entering the room he stopped with surprise on seeing Provis, who came forward holding out a bible.

"Take it in your right hand," he commanded. "Lord strike you dead on the spot, if you ever split in any way whatever. Kiss it."

"Do so, as he wishes it," I asked Herbert.

Herbert was soon told the horrible tale. His feelings I could see were the same as my own. But he warned me that if I were to leave Provis immediately, he might well, in his disappointment, give himself up to the authorities. I must, therefore, get him out of England, before I could extricate myself. To do this my only hope was to promise to accompany him. First of

all, however, we must endeavour to learn from him some more of his history.

"In jail and out of jail, in jail and out of jail—that's my story," he said. "Tramping, begging, thieving, working sometimes when I could, doing most things that don't pay and lead to trouble I got to be a man."

Then he told how he had got in with a forger called Compeyson, whose assistant had been a Mr. Arthur. Arthur, however, had died, haunted by the remorse for the harm he had done a rich old lady. Finally, Provis and Compeyson had been caught. The forethought and cunning of the latter had got him off with a light sentence. Provis had sworn to get even with him, and he it was whom Provis had dragged back to the Hulks, when they were both convicts there.

"Whatever I done is worked out and paid for," he insisted.

When he had finished Herbert passed me a piece of paper on which he had written:

"Young Havisham's name was Arthur. Compeyson the man who professed to be his sister's lover."

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I determined to visit Estella once more before leaving the country. I was surprised to hear at Richmond that she was in the country, so I pursued her. No sooner had I arrived at the Blue Boar Inn when I saw Bentley Drummle. I took as little notice of him as possible, but at once set off to Miss Havisham's.

"What wind blows you here?" she asked.

"I wished to see Estella, Miss Havisham. But what I have to say to her, I will say to you. I have discovered my patron. It is a most unfortunate discovery, but that is another's secret." Then I reproached her for the delusions she had fostered in me.

"Who am I, for God's sake, that I should be kind?" she cried.

Then I pleaded with her for Herbert Pocket and his father. I told her of what I had done for Herbert and asked her to continue with what I now could not complete.

For a while she did not reply.

"What else?" she then said.

I turned to Estella then and cried: "I love you. You know, Estella, that I have loved you long and dearly."

"When you say you love me, I know it only as a form of words. But I feel nothing," and putting her hand on her breast, she said "There is nothing there. Besides I am going to marry Mr. Drummle."

"Such a mean brute," I exclaimed. "Such a stupid brute."

"Don't be afraid of my being a blessing to him," she replied.

I continued to expostulate, but she remained unmoved. Then as I got up to go I looked at Miss Havisham—her whole figure seemed petrified in a ghastly stare of pity and remorse.

Back to London and I went immediately, despair in my heart. When I arrived at my lodgings the porter handed me a note in Wemmick's writing:

"Don't go home," it said.

* * * * *

Having spent the night at an hotel, I arrived early the next morning at Wemmick's. In the most circumlocutory manner possible, hinting always but never declaring facts openly, he gave me to understand that he had heard that my house was being watched, that Herbert had secretly removed Provis to the water-side house of his prospective father-in-law, and finally, in answer to a positive question from me, that Compeyson was alive and in London. He advised me to wait until nightfall before going there.

Thus, having spent the day at Walworth, I set out in the evening to the address Wemmick had given me. I found the house without difficulty and Herbert opened the door to me. He led me into the parlour and introduced me to Clara, who left us immediately in response to a cry from her father who lay bed-ridden on the first floor. He sounded a most cross old man, and Herbert confessed that, although he had never met him, cross he certainly seemed to be. We then mounted to Provis's rooms on the top floor. I found him calm and quiet, and reasonable to any suggestions we made. It was decided that it was as well for him to lie low for a while, during which time it would be unwise for me to visit him. Herbert,

however, would be able to bring the news. Meanwhile, I was to buy a rowing boat, and to practise in it so that I should become a familiar and, therefore, unsuspecting sight in it. When the time came we hoped to be able to make a get-away in it and pick up a sea-going steamer farther down the river.

Several weeks went by thus. For me they were bleak and dreary indeed. Two strange occurrences happened, however.

The first, one evening after I had been to see Mr. Wopsle at his theatre. He was waiting for me when I came out. I shook hands and complimented him on his performance. He then asked me if I had noticed a gentleman sitting near me in the theatre. I said no and asked him why. He told me because he was sure that this man whom he had observed was the convict whom he and I had seen nearly murdered by another on the marshes years before. Then he began to talk of other matters which hid my confusion.

The second, was a chance meeting with Mr. Jaggers, who invited me to dine with him. Wemmick, too, was to be of the party. At dinner he asked Wemmick to give me a note from Miss Havisham, requesting me to visit her.

Mr. Jaggers then went on to talk of Estella.

"Our friend, the Spider, has won the pool I hear," he said. "I only hope the marriage may turn out to the lady's satisfaction, for it certainly will never be to the satisfaction of both."

As he spoke I noticed once more the housekeeper. Certain gestures of hers once more reminded me vividly of someone else. Then, in a flash, I knew. She must be, she definitely could only be Estella's mother!

No sooner had Wemmick and I left the house than I began to question him about the woman, reminding him of his ancient advice to me to take note of her.

"Well, I don't know all of her story, but a score of years ago that woman was tried at the Old Bailey for murder and was acquitted. Mr. Jaggers was for her and worked the case in a way quite astonishing," he replied. Apparently, she had been accused of the murder of her husband's mistress.

"You may be sure," said Wemmick "that he never dwelt on the strength of her hands then."

Then Wemmick told me that she had also been suspected of killing her child, but of that there had been no trace of evidence.

"Do you remember the sex of the child," I asked anxiously.

"Said to have been a girl," he answered non-committally.

* * * * *

With Miss Havisham's note in my pocket I went down to see her the next day. She seemed listless and while it was with difficulty that she comprehended me, she was anxious to discover the details of the request I had made her concerning Herbert. She granted it, then turned to me:

"Are you very unhappy now?" she asked.

"I have other causes of disquiet than any you know of," I replied.

"'Tis noble in you to attempt to absolve me," she replied, and taking a paper wrote instructions to Mr. Jaggers to pay me the money I needed for Herbert. "My name is on the first leaf," she said. "Pray, if you ever can, write beneath it 'I forgive her.'"

"I do forgive you," I cried. "But Estella is a different case."

"I know it, I know it, Pip, my dear," she moaned, "but truly at first I only meant to save her from misery like my own. At first I meant no more."

Then I asked her what she knew of Estella's parentage. She knew nothing. We talked some more and then I left to take a walk among those shadows so associated with my past. When I came back I saw she slept.

Suddenly a great flame appeared—she had come too near the fire. With a cry she leapt up, a sheet of flame; I enveloped her in my greatcoat, shouting for help the while. We extinguished the flames and sent for a surgeon. He ordered her bed to be put on the dining table, and there she was laid, where I remembered her having said she would lie one day.

As I bent over her to kiss her goodbye, she murmured:

"Take a pencil and write under my name 'I forgive her.'"

* * * * *

My hands had been a good deal burnt, but on my return home I found Herbert the best of nurses. I told him my news of Miss Havisham, so that he might tell his father. To Estella, who was in Paris, I had already sent a message. My chief concern about the condition of my hands was whether I should be well enough to row the boat and so take Provis to safety. Of him, Herbert had good news. He was well and calmer and more quiet than ever. He had told Herbert more of his life, how he had been married and had a child, and how his wife had murdered another girl of whom she was jealous.

"Was the woman brought in guilty?" I exclaimed.

"No, she was acquitted. My poor Handel, I hurt you," he said. For he was changing my bandages and feared my cry was a result of his having hurt me. I pressed him for more details, and they all tallied. For Jaggers, he told me, had defended her; too, she was thought to have murdered hers and Provis's child. I became excited and Herbert tried to calm me.

"Herbert," I cried. "Look at me closely, am I in a fever?"

"No, no, my dear boy," he said. "Excited a little, but quite yourself."

"I know I am quite myself," I said slowly. "And I know that the man we are hiding on the river is Estella's father."

* * * * *

Let it be said that when I next saw Mr. Jaggers, to collect the money for Herbert, I accosted him about this matter of Estella's parentage; Wemmick, too, was present. Let it be said that Mr. Jaggers in his inimitable style allowed the truth of my suspicions. And did he not also justify himself. Had he not, as best it lay in his power, done his best for father, wife and daughter? Who can deny that perhaps he had? Wemmick had revealed a heart, I do not think one can deny Jaggers's one either.

Wemmick soon advised me—not openly, of course—that the time had come to move Provis. So Herbert and I decided to move without delay. However, not a week before we were due to go, I received a note which ran:

"If you want information regarding your Uncle Provis, you had better be on the marshes to-morrow night."

Naturally, I was alarmed. I felt bound to go; so leaving a note to Herbert, saying I had gone to see Miss Havisham, I returned once more to the marshes of my childhood, whence so many strange happenings had originated.

Even I, who knew the place so well, was frightened as I walked towards my rendezvous. Suddenly I felt myself attacked from behind, and in a second was prone and bound on the earth. A light was struck and a familiar face peered over me. It was Orlick.

He began by bemoaning the ills I had done him in the past my being favoured by Joe, setting Biddy against him, and losing him his job at Miss Havisham's. Then he told me that, as luck would have it, he had fallen in with Compeyson. And now he was employed to be my murderer. I could see that he was by no means averse to the job.

While he spoke he had been drinking, and as he drank the last dregs, I knew that it was the end of my life as well as of the bottle. He lifted the gun, with which he admitted he had attempted to kill my sister, and struck.

At that very moment he was seized from behind and the blow missed me.

"Gently, gently Handel," came Herbert's voice and never so welcome had it sounded. Then I fainted.

Later he explained that when he found my note, he had also found Orlick's, which I had dropped on the floor.

"But what day is it?" I cried, for I feared that I had let pass by the day arranged for Provis's escape. But all was well, and I had still two days in which to recover.

* * * * *

Obviously our precautions now became redoubled. We held no further communication with the house where Provis lay. It had been arranged for us to pick him up in the boat late on Wednesday, to travel down the river all night and endeavour to pick up the morning steamer either to Rotterdam or to Hamburg, whichever we saw first.

"Dear boy," Provis said when we picked him up. "Faithful, dear boy, well done. Thank ye, thank ye."

We set off down the dark silent river. Though nothing

untoward happened, we were all nervous, perhaps Provis alone was not unduly concerned.

"For," as he explained "it was flat over there. I could come or go, and no one questioned. Now we can no more see to the bottom of the next few hours, than we can see to the bottom of this river."

• We struck on through the dirty, dismal night—at every moment one or other of us seemed to hear pursuit. Finally, we rested at an inn—a gruesome place not unbeknown to smugglers we were sure. The potsman, who settled us in with warmth and food, asked us if we had seen a four-oared galley. We said no.

"Custom 'Us I reckon," he added.

This was disquieting news, so that the next morning we reconnoitred the river before embarking, but saw nothing suspicious. So we set off, and within an hour saw the smoke of the approaching steamer. Provis and I made our adieus to Herbert and we got ready to board this steamer as soon as we could hail her, when suddenly:

"Ahoy, there!" we heard and turned round, and there was a police galley!

"You have a returned transport there," a man cried. "I apprehend Abel Magwitch, otherwise Provis, and call upon him to surrender, and you to assist."

The galley then closed in on us, and the police were about to board us when there was a great cry. Magwitch leapt up and seized a cloaked figure at the back of the galley—it was Compeyson. At that moment there was a crash—the steamer had struck the galley. Then all was chaos, and I found myself struggling in the water. Eventually, we were all rescued, all of us save the two convicts. Then I saw a dark mass floating down tide—it was Magwitch who, more dead than alive, was dragged on board and manacled. He came to after a while and, seeing me, smiled:

"Look here, dear boy!" he said. "It's best, as a gentleman should not be known to belong to me. Only come and see me—."

"I will never stir from your side," I cried. "Please God, I will be as true to you as you have been to me."

For I could not but feel that I had not been so true to dear Joe, as this manacled convict had been to me.

As much time as was allowed, I spent with him. He never doubted that his wealth would be mine, though I knew in fact it would be sequestered by the government.

"Thankee, dear boy, you've never deserted me," he said one day, and taking my hand laid it on his breast.

"Are you in much pain?" I asked.

"I don't complain of none," he said, his breath labouring.

"You never do complain," I replied, knowing he had spoken his last word. Leaning over him, I said:

"Dear Magwitch, I have something to say. Can you hear me?"

He pressed my hand gently.

"You had a child once, whom you loved and lost?"

A stronger pressure on my hand.

"She lived and found powerful friends. She is a lady and I love her."

With difficulty he raised my hand to his lips, smiled, and was dead. I know of no better words to say than:

"O Lord, be merciful to him, a sinner."

* * * * *

Ill in health, my mind disturbed by all these fearful occurrences, I lay in a fever. Beset on all sides by debts, I was in despair, or would have been, had it not been for Herbert, who now a partner in his firm, offered me a job. Not only did he offer me a job, but he offered me a home, with a pressing invitation from Clara.

One other ceremony I attended—Wemmick's marriage to Miss Skiffin. Even the Aged Parent came out for the occasion, and a merry one it was.

"Not to be mentioned you know where," were Wemmick's parting words. "I don't want Mr. Jaggers to think my brain is softening!"

My despair turned to an aggravated fever, and I would have been so alone if it had not been for the arrival of Joe. And much news he had for me. Miss Havisham had died leaving her money to Estella, except for £4,000 to Herbert's

father 'because of Pip's account of him.' Orlick had been convicted of breaking into Uncle Pumblechook's house, and so on, and so on. Joe talked away, which relieved my mind, and cared for me and . . . me to relieve my body. Then, when I was well, he departed without warning, just leaving a note and a receipt for my debts which he himself had paid.

Naturally, I pursued him to the country, spending a night at the Blue Boar, where I was amused at the different behaviour exhibited towards one going out of his expectations. It was with relief that I turned my footsteps towards the forge. I found Biddy and Joe arm in arm.

"Dear Biddy, how smart you are," I cried. "And Joe, how smart you are."

"Yes, dear old Pip, old chap," he replied.

"It's my wedding day," cried Biddy, in a burst of happiness "and I am married to Joe!"

With unfeigned joy I embraced them both, and implored them to forgive my former ill-behaviour.

"O dear old Pip, old chap," said Joe. "God knows as I forgive you, if I have anythink to forgive."

"Amen! And God knows I do," echoed Biddy.

So blessing them and with love I went my way.

* * * * *

I went my way to work. For many a long year I worked hard, living frugally but contentedly in Herbert and Clara's happy home. Eventually I became the Third partner, and then and then only did Clarriker betray my secret to Herbert. Nor were we the worse friends for the long concealment. Frequently I would write to Joe and Biddy, but business prevented my seeing them.

Finally, my position in life being secure, if modest, I went down to the forge. There were Joe and Biddy, older but happy, and there on my stool, in my corner was—I again!

"We give him the name of Pip for your sake, dear old chap," said Joe.

"Biddy," said I, "you must give or at any rate lend Pip to me, one of these days."

"No, no," she said gently. "You must marry."

I denied that I would, however. Yet I still thought of Estella. I had heard how cruelly her husband had treated her; I had heard, too, how a fatal accident had mercifully released her. I did not know if she was remarried.

That evening I walked out alone, and my steps led me to Miss Havisham's manor. As I walked amid the familiar shadows I perceived the figure of a woman approaching me.

"Estella," I cried.

"I am greatly changed, I wonder you know me?"

I asked her if she often came back.

"No," she said. "I came here to take a last leave of it before it changes, for it is sold—all of it. A little I had clung on to through all the wretched years—now even that is gone."

She asked after me, and I told her of my moderate success.

"I have often thought of you," she said, "since my duty has not been incompatible with that remembrance."

"You have always had your place in my heart," I replied.

"I little thought to take leave of you, in taking leave of this spot. I am glad, very glad to do so."

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place. As the mists rose we wandered on together, and amidst all these shadows I could see no shadow of another parting between us.

LORNA DOONE

Based on the story

by

R. D. BLACKMORE

R. D. Blackmore (1825-1900) published "Lorna Doone," his most famous novel, in 1869. Set in the times of Charles II, the novel has a slight historical background, and several of its characters did, in fact, live in those times. The book has enjoyed great popularity and has been filmed and dramatised.

IF anybody cares to read a simple tale told simply, I, John Ridd, of the Parish of Oare, in the county of Somerset, yeoman and churchwarden, have seen and had a share in some doings of this neighbourhood which I will try to set down in order, God sparing my life and memory. And they who light upon this story should bear in mind that I am nothing more than a plain unlettered man, not gifted with long words save what I may have won from the Bible, or Master William Shakespeare.

My father being of good substance, and seized in his own right, from many generations, of one (and that the best and largest) of the three farms into which our parish is divided; he, John Ridd the elder, being a great admirer of learning and well able to write his own name, sent me, his only son, to be schooled in Tiverton. Here, by the time I was twelve years old, I had risen into the upper school. I rose no farther, for it came to pass, by the grace of God, that I was called away from learning.

It was in November, in the year of our Lord 1673, that our good neighbour John Fry came to the school to bid me return home.

When I saw him I said: "Oh, John, John! What's the use of your coming now, and bringing my pony over the moors in this cruel weather, when the holidays do not begin till Wednesday fortnight?"

But John merely smiled. Nor would he tell me why my father had not come, and by the way he avoided looking at me I knew something was wrong. I packed my few clothes and a book or two and we set off.

From Tiverton to the town of Oare is a long and painful road, for the way is unmade to say the least, on this side of Dulverton, and the memory of that two-day ride, with its contrast of a cosy inn and the biting cold of the moors, remains with me still. The weather got worse as we started to cross the moors, and night was coming on, with a thick mist, while we were still some miles from the farm. It was at this point that John said: "Hould thee tongue, lad; us be naigh the Doone track now, two maile from Dunkery Beacon Hill, the haighest place of Hexmoor. It so may happen that they be abroad to-night; us must crawl on our belly places, boy!"

I knew at once what he meant—those bloody Doones of Bagworthy, the awe of all Devon and Somerset, outlaws, traitors, murderers. My legs began to tremble at the thought of them. There was good reason, for soon we heard the sound of horses' feet, then a grunting of weary men. In a trice we were both off our horses and hiding in the wet heather.

We were high above a gully, and I was able to make out the shapes of the riders. They were heavy men, with plunder heaped on their saddles. Some had carcasses of sheep swinging with their skins on, some had deer, and one had what I was certain was a child flung across his saddle bow. They rode past, about thirty of them, without so much as a glance in our direction.

When the noise of them had died away we found our horses and rode on. My father never came to meet us. There was not even the lantern light on the peg against the cows' house, and no one said "Hold your noise!" to the dogs, or shouted "Here our Jack is!" Then I heard the sound of woman's weeping; and there inside the door my mother and sister were, choking and holding together. Although they were my dearest loves, I could not bear to look at them.

My dear father had been killed by the Doones of Bagworthy while riding home from Porlock market, on the Saturday evening. When the Doone robber told him to stop, he set his staff above his head, and rode at him. He outwitted this man, but another Doone, hiding by a peat stack, with a long gun set to his shoulder, got poor father against the sky . . . and I cannot bear to tell the rest of it. Thus it was that Plover's Barrows Farm had a new master only twelve years old.

The sorrow that had come to us was all too common on Exmoor. The hand of the Doones lay heavy on the country for miles around. They were a proud, high-born family which had been expelled from Scotland many years before. Embittered and vicious, the family had wandered through England until they found the deep, dark valley hidden in the hills of Exmoor which now bore their name. Here they lived as a robber band, and no honest man in the West Country was safe from their attacks.

All that winter I helped on the farm and practised with the firelock which John Fry lent to me, for I was determined to become both strong and expert with a gun to fulfil the plan I had in mind. I used to roam the moors and sometimes venture close to the stronghold of the Doones.

One day, as my mother was sickly, I promised her I would catch her some fish of which she was very fond. The stream where I found them was deep and swift, but wondrous full of the kind I wanted. It was a winter's day, more than two years after that sad time when I had ridden home from school, and I soon found I was going where I had never been before. The stream was running swifter than ever between the high walls of a rocky gorge, but it was not deep, and I waded in the water, looking for the pools where I knew more fish would be. Suddenly I slipped, and before I knew what to do, the current had whirled me along into deep water; the icy cold closed over my head, and the world was green and gliddery. I tried to regain my balance in vain.

When I came to, my hands were full of young grass and mould; and a little girl was kneeling at my side.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she whispered softly as I opened my eyes and looked at her; "now you will try to be better, won't you?"

I lay weak and helpless. She stared at me and asked me my name. I told her and asked her hers.

"Lorna Doone," she answered in a low voice, as if afraid of it, and hanging her head. "If you please, my name is Lorna Doone, and I thought you must have heard of it." And she began to cry.

"Don't weep," I said; "whatever you do. I am sure you never have done any harm. Look, I will give you all my fish, Lorna, and catch some more for my mother; only don't cry."

She flung her little arms up, and looked at me so piteously, that what did I do but kiss her. It seemed to be a very odd thing, when I came to think of it, for I hated kissing, as most honest boys do. But she touched my heart with a sudden delight. Now, seeing how I heeded her, and feeling how I had kissed her, although she was such a little girl, eight years old or thereabouts, she turned to the stream in a bashful manner, and began to watch the water. Presently she turned to me and said: "They would kill us both and bury us here if they found us. I—because I have spoken to you; and you—because you have found your way here, where no stranger has ever been before."

Just then was a shout. It frightened me, and Lorna's face was altered with terror. "Quickly," she said: "Go round the rocks by the waterfall. You'll find a hole between the rocks. There is a way out through it which only the Doones know. Go through it—and some day perhaps you will come again to see me?"

I dared not stop to answer for the voices were coming nearer.

When I got back to the farm everyone was wondering where I had been, but no one could get out of me where I had been, and as the weeks went by, what with the busy life of the farm, with the sheep shearing and the hay season, I, too, almost forgot the strange adventure which had taken me through the secret way to the stronghold of the Doones and my meeting with the sweet child who bore that terrible family name.

The summer and autumn passed, and the farm prepared

itself for the cold of winter, with its happy time of Christmas. We expected that year to have as our guest Mr. Reuben Huckaback, whom many good folk in Dulverton will remember long after my time. He was my mother's uncle and he owned the very best shop in town, with a fine trade in soft ware. Now when I came in on that day before one o'clock after seeing to the cattle I fully expected to see Uncle Ben sitting by the fire. But he was not there.

"There be something sadly amiss, Johnnie," said my mother.

I tried to tell her that all might yet be well, and Uncle merely delayed by the weather or his business, and so we agreed to have our dinner. But afterwards, as there was still no sign I set out with my gun to look for him. I followed the track on the side of the hill, for we have no wheels on Exmoor yet, nor ever shall, I suppose; and after that I went along to the Lynn stream, and leapt it, so to the moor beyond. I walked for more than three miles, and though it was but three o'clock it was hard to see, for a thick mist had come up. It was then that I heard some words coming to me through the fog.

"Lord have mercy upon me! Oh Lord, where be I a-going?" These words, with many jogs between them, were followed by a loud groan, and then a choking. I made towards the sound, as nigh as ever I could guess, and presently was met, point blank, by the head of a mountain pony. Upon its back lay my Uncle Ben, bound down, with his feet on the neck and his head to the tail, and his arms falling down like stirrups. The wild little nag was tossing and rolling hard to get rid of its unaccustomed burden. I caught the animal and cut the thongs that bound my uncle, and we set out for Plover's Barrows without ado. He was too weak to say much, but to promise I should marry his daughter Ruth, and have his savings at the wedding—a promise to which I made no answer.

Once he was in the house and reviving by the fire we heard his tale. Of course, the Doones had robbed Uncle Reuben; and afterwards they had grown sportive, taking his sober nag from him and tying him to a wild pony. For two or three hours they had much sport, chasing him through the fog; and then waxing hungry, they went their way. He would not see,

as we told him, that he was lucky that they had spared his life.

To us people of the moorlands who suffered robbery and murder at the hands of the Doones the adventure of Uncle Reuben was not a great matter, so accustomed had we become to their depredations, but if the Doones had known it, their sport with the fat old merchant was to seal their doom.

My uncle would not let the matter rest, but must ask me to ride with him to Ley Manor, above Lynmouth, where he demanded to see the Justiciary of the King's Peace. He was the Baron de Whichehalse, a white-haired man of very noble presence. He smiled very gently when he learned the reason of our visit.

"You want a warrant against the Doones, Master Huckaback?" he asked. "Which of the Doones, so please you? And the Christian names, what be they?" With many similar questions he showed that he had no desire to parry with the Doones until my uncle, in a temper, exclaimed: "My lord, is this your justice? If I go to London myself for it, the King shall know how his commission—how a man may be robbed; that in His Majesty's good county of Somerset——"

"Ah, there you have it," replied the Baron. "This affair took place in Somerset. We, humble servants of His Majesty, are in commission of his peace in the county of Devon only, and therefore could never deal with it."

We left at that, and all throughout the homeward road Uncle Ben was very silent. "Mark my words," he said as we neared the end of our journey, "this villain job shall not have ending here. I have another card to play. I will go to the King himself, or a man who is bigger than the King, and to whom I have ready access. I will not tell you his name at present; only if you are brought before him, never will you forget it." That was true enough, as I discovered afterwards; for the man he meant was Judge Jeffreys.

"And when are you likely to see him, sir?" I asked.

"Maybe in the spring, maybe not till summer. I cannot go to London on purpose; only when my business shall take me there. He will make some of your squires shake in their shoes, I reckon."

It came to me shortly after this that the time was coming which marked the anniversary of the day when I had first met

Lorna, seven long years before. I felt impelled to visit the place again, and without word to my mother or my sister Annie I set off for the wild country of the Doones. At last I came to the narrow cleft of the rocks and I made my way through. I ventured to look forth, and there saw the loveliest sight—one glimpse of which was enough to make me kneel in the water of the stream. Lorna was walking there.

She was turning to fly when she noticed me, frightened, perhaps, by my stature. I just said, "Lorna Doone!"

She knew me at once, from my manner and ways, and a smile broke through her trembling, as sunshine comes through willow leaves.

"Oh, indeed," says she, with a feint of anger; "who are you, sir, and how do you know my name?"

"I am John Ridd," I answered; "the boy who gave you those fish when you were only a little thing, seven years ago."

"Oh, yes, I remember," she agreed; "but you seem not to remember, sir, how perilous this place is."

Thereafter, without more ado, it struck me that I had better go, and have no more to say to her. "Mistress Lorna," I began; "I will depart in fear of causing disquiet. If any rogue should shoot me it would grieve you, I make bold to say; and it would be the death of my mother. Try to think of me, now and then; and I will bring you some new laid eggs."

"I thank you heartily," said Lorna; "but you need not come to see me. You can put them in my little bower, where I am almost always—to be away from them."

"Only show me where it is. Thrice a day I will come——"

"Nay, Master Ridd, I would never show thee—only it so happens thou hast found the way already. This little clearing is my bower."

I touched her white hand softly when she gave it to me; and hurried away; and then, for the rest of the homeward road, was mad with every man in the world, who would dare to think of looking at her.

It was spring before I met Lorna again, though I had sometimes looked to see if she was in her bower. But this third occasion was the best, for we were able to talk. She told me of her life, how she had known neither mother nor father,

but was under the guardianship of her grandfather, Sir Ensor Doone, a very old man and very harsh of manner.

"All around me is violence and robbery, coarse delight and savage pain, reckless joke and hopeless death. There is none to lead me forward, none to teach me right; young as I am, I live beneath a curse that lasts for ever." Here Lorna broke down and wept.

After she recovered she told me more of her unhappy life among men who in their rough way tried to look after her, for they regarded her as their Princess. But Lorna had no friends save a little Cornish girl named Gwenny whom she had saved when she had been found abandoned on the moors. But greatest sorrow of all was to hear that Carver Doone, one of the leaders of the outlaw band, was taking a newer, different interest in Lorna. Though there was nothing I could directly do I made her promise that if she were in imminent danger she was to put a dark mantle over a great white stone that hung near the top of the cliff at the place where we met. That I could see from Plover's Barrows on a clear day, and at its sign I would hurry to her rescue, come what may.

But for a time matters were to be otherwise. The next afternoon, when work was over, I perceived a man come riding along. He stopped at our gate, flourishing a white thing in the air.

"Service of the King!" he proclaimed; "service of our Lord the King. Come hither, thou great yokel, at risk of fine or imprisonment."

I went to him, as becomes a loyal man. "Is there anywhere in this cursed country called Plover's Barrows Farm?" he asked. "For last twenty mile at least they told me 'twere only half-a-mile further."

"Sir," I replied. "This is the farm, and you are kindly welcome." He dismounted and came with me to the house, where after he had sat down to a great meal with us, he told me his business. He was Jeremy Stickles, an apparitor of the Court of King's Bench, and he handed me the paper he carried. I read it slowly.

"To our good subject, John Ridd: by these presents, greetings. These are to require thee in the name of the King, to appear in person before the Right Worshipful the Justices

of His Majesty's Bench at Westminster, laying aside all thy business, and there to deliver such evidence as is within thy cognisance, touching certain methods whereby the peace of the King, and the well-being of this realm is, are, or otherwise may be impeached, impugned, imperilled, or otherwise detrimented." There followed a signature and four great seals. On the top was written, "Ride, ride, ride! On His Gracious Majesty's business; spur and spare not."

It was a long and weary journey to London—a town which was a hideous and dirty place after Exmoor. The only things that pleased me were the River Thames and the hall and church of Westminster. But whenever I wandered about the streets, what with the noise the people made, the number of coaches, the swaggering of great courtiers, many and many a time I longed to be back home, for fear of losing my temper.

I was kept waiting around Westminster for two months before I was summoned to appear before the great Judge Jeffreys. The Lord Chief Justice of England was a man of frightening countenance, but I answered his questions straightforwardly, and he liked me for it. His questions about the Doones were few and simple, and then he asked me whether there were signs of disaffection to His Majesty. I told him that there was none, but he questioned me very closely before he dismissed me and said I could return to Exmoor, for which I was very glad. The return journey, which I made on foot, took me twelve days, and I reached Plover's Barrows somewhat footsore, for I had walked through almost every hour of daylight in that hot summer's sun.

As soon as I was home I turned my eyes to the rock above Lorna's bower. And sure enough I saw (when it was too late to see) that the white stone had been covered. For a moment I stood amazed at my evil fortune; then I started off as fast as I was able. I reached the place heedless of the briars or the watching Doones.

I had not been long in the bower when I saw her walking towards me. She looked frightened, where I had hoped for signs of gladness.

"Mistress Lorna, I had hope that you would be glad at my arrival," I said.

"Oh, yea, she replied listlessly, "that was two months ago

or more. That is the time I have made the signal, and you have not answered it till now ! ”

I told her quickly of my journey to London, and then she explained to me the sadness which had come into her life. The family had wanted her to take an oath to marry Carver Doone, and when she had refused, some had been for using force, and some counselled patience. There would be only one outcome, and so she had made her signal for me to come and take her away if so I thought best.

We stayed talking for a long time, and though I wished to take her there and then, she would not have it because of the revenge which might come on the farm from the avenging Doones. For the meantime, until we could find a proper plan, we contrived a daily mode of signals by which I could know how she fared. With that arrangement, and a gentle kiss, we parted.

I had much work to do on the farm after my absence in London, and though with watching for Lorna's signals and attending to the harvest I had little time for gossip about the affairs of my neighbours, I could not help but notice that unusual things were happening on the moor. There were movements at night, and strange sounds in the district where legend said were precious metals in the ground. The orders of Judge Jeffreys began to take effect, and Jeremy Stickles came down once more from London, and stayed with us on the farm. The frosts and fogs of winter began before he could arrange a projected attack on the Doone stronghold, and I, worried about Lorna once the weather meant that she could not come out so often to the bower where we often met, at last risked approaching her in her dwelling under the cover of darkness. The news I had was black indeed. Sir Ensor Doone, the one man who could keep Carver Doone from abducting Lorna, was dying, and Lorna feared his life could not last many days. A few days after this meeting there began a great winter storm the like of which has never been known on Exmoor.

For three days and three nights it snowed without cessation. Afterwards came a frost that split great trees asunder and froze the cattle as they huddled in the barns. Out on the moors sheep were killed in their hundreds, and only at Plover's Barrows, of all the farms around, did unremitting work save

some of the livestock by bringing them into the farmhouse itself.

Week after week the great cold went on, and I was unable to reach the Valley of the Doones or even see the signals I had arranged. At last, maddened with misgivings I contrived some snowshoes and made my way through drifts that were piled high above the hedgerows so I scarce knew where I was.

The beautiful Glen Doone was besnowed half up its sides. Not a patch of grass was there; not a tree. Then the blizzard began again, and all was blotted out. I forced my way to the Doone house itself, and found it partly drifted up. There was no sign of life, and I cautiously knocked on the window which I knew to be Lorna's.

"Who's there?" said a shrill voice which I guessed was Gwenny's.

"Only me, John Ridd," I answered, and she opened the casement. The story they told me was a sorry one. The Doones were starving. The snow had prevented them going on their marauding expeditions; they had no fire or fuel, and Lorna and Gwenny had not eaten for some days, which I knew must be true from the way they took the bread I had brought with me in case I was myself marooned for longer than I had planned. What they told me made me resolve to take them both away.

"In two hours' time I shall again be with you," I said, preparing to take my leave. "Have all you care to take in a very little compass; and Gwenny must have no baggage. I shall knock loud, and then wait a little; and then knock twice, very softly."

To my great delight I found that the weather, not often friendly to lovers, and lately seeming so hostile, had in the most important matter done me a signal service. The raging stream by which I had first been carried into the Doone Valley when a boy of twelve, was now frozen hard. I could bring a sledge through it, and the two girls could easily escape through it. There would be no need for them to climb over the rocks as I had done.

Back at the farm it took but a few minutes to tell my mother that she must prepare warm beds and food, for my Lorna was coming; and soon I set out once more, with a sledge,

and brandy, and warm coverings. And so, shortly, after darkness had fallen I brought my love to Plover's Barrows.

Lorna went to my mother's heart, by the very nearest road, even as she had come to mine; I mean the road of pity, smoothed by grace, and youth, and gentleness. She brought only a few clothes and a necklace of brilliants, a pretty thing which she treasured as a childhood plaything. I thought little of it, until some days later, it chanced that my cousin, Tom Faggus, whom I am sorry to say had once been a highwayman and therefore had much knowledge of such things, pronounced the beads to be diamonds, and of great value. I was not pleased at the news, for it seemed to me that even if Carver Doone should not pursue Lorna for herself, his greed would spur him on to take the necklace, so soon as the snows should melt and he should ascertain where Lorna had gone. And so it was to happen.

A few days after the snows began to melt and I was busy in some outer fields of the farm, Lorna stole out into the garden for a little air. Suddenly she saw two glittering eyes peering at her from behind a willow tree; she knew that it was Carver Doone. Unable to shriek or fly, she gazed at him as if bewitched. Then Carver, with his deadly smile, gloating upon her horror, lifted his long gun and pointed it full at Lorna's heart. Then, with a well-pleased grin at the terror he was causing, he lowered the muzzle inch by inch. When it pointed to her feet he pulled the trigger, and the ball flung the mould all over her.

"I have spared you this time," he said; "only because it suits my plans; and I never yield to temper. But unless you come back to-morrow, with all you took away, your death is here, where it has long been waiting." And he struck the breech of his gun. Then he turned away, not deigning even once to look back again.

When we all heard what had happened I swore to God that I would smite down Carver Doone; or else he should smite me down. And Lorna, bless her for her thoughts, said that she would return to save the farm and me from any further harm. Of this, of course, we would have no further mention. But I felt certain that one night the Doones would be sure to attack us—once the floods of the melting snows had gone, and the moon was up to help them in their nefarious work.

They came about a month later—a small band. I had

look-outs posted in the outlying fields, and we received good warning of their approach. Nevertheless two miscreants were able to fire a rick of hay before I and my men set on them. It was a bloody fight while it lasted, and surprise was on our side. Two dead Doones and two flung into prison by order of Jeremy Stickles was the account of that night. I believed that the unaccustomed resistance would make the outlaws think twice before they attacked again.

This again proved true, and so on the next occasion they tried guile. He whom they called the Counsellor, a very old man, but the craftiest rogue of all, came in peace to talk to Lorna Doone. He was admitted and treated with courtesy, but when he went, Lorna's necklace went with him. The old man played on the superstitions of my sister Annie and got her to show him the dairy. When he looked on the great bowls of milk set aside while the cream rose he whispered in the girl's ear, "Have you ever heard that if you pass across the top, without breaking the surface, a string of beads, or polished glass, or anything of that kind, the cream will set three times as solid, and in thrice the quantity?"

"No, sir; I have never heard of that," said the simple Annie; "what a thing it is to be learned! I will get my coral necklace."

"Coral will not do my child," the old man answered; "nor will anything coloured. The beads must be of plain common glass; but the brighter the better."

In a trice Annie was away to Lorna's room and returned with the necklace. The old man grabbed it greedily and made some passes over the cream bowls with it. "Now go to your room," he advised; "without so much as a word to anyone. Bolt yourself in, and for three hours now, read the Lord's Prayer backwards." Then, with much dignity of bearing, he took his leave. Poor Annie was desolated when we told her that she had been instrumental in helping the wily old man to rob Lorna of her diamonds. We could none of us reprimand her as she well deserved.

It was yet another item for me to settle when the time came—and it seemed that it would not be long. Jeremy Stickles, armed with the orders of the King, was organising his forces for an attack on the Doones in their own valley. Troops were to come from Exeter, and hundreds of country folk who

had suffered from the Doones for many years, sharpened their old cutlasses and laid pitchforks on the grindstone, each bragging as if he intended to kill ten Doones himself. Jeremy, riding round the country to rally the forces, came across a strange story from an old woman living in a tavern. She had been an Italian maid, and she told, in giving details of the crimes of the Doones, how her mistress had been attacked while travelling in a coach. Before her baby had been snatched away she had slipped a diamond necklace over its head. She herself, a high-born lady with great estates, had long since died, but the child—there seemed little doubt that it was Lorna. It was a strange tale, and I pondered over it for many an hour, but I decided until we could get the rights of it, Lorna should not know.

There was plenty to do in the days which followed. Jeremy Stickles had his forces encamped near the farm. His "yellow boys," as he called the Somerset trained bands, were brave but unskilled in fighting. The sons of Devon were better disciplined, fine fellows and eager to prove themselves. They were ready to fight the men of Somerset in addition to the Doones, and there was scarcely a man among them but could not have trounced three of the yellow men, and would have done it gladly, in honour of the red facings he wore.

Altogether we had a hundred and twenty men of Somerset and Devon, and fifteen troopers of the regular army. When our band defiled down the lane from the farm there was a good deal of boasting. We had three culverins with which to make the final assault. It had been arranged that either body of men should act in its own country only. So when we reached the top of the hill the sons of Devon marched on and across the track leading to the Doone gate to reach the Western side; meanwhile the "yellow lads" were to stay on the Eastern highland. The regular troopers were to assault the main gate itself.

I wish I could only tell what happened, in the battle of that day, especially as nearly all the people round these parts have got the tale amiss. But in truth I cannot say exactly, even the part in which I helped. The truth seems to be that the carefully laid plans of Master Stickles went awry because of the jealousy of the two counties. By a mistake the Devon men fired their first balls right into the Somerset lads creeping up on the other side. In an instant, the latter yelled for revenge, and the

Doones were forgotten in the age-old feud of the West country. The Doones, who must have laughed at the thunder passing over their heads in their stronghold, issued out and fell on the rear of the Somerset men, killing many. This was the melancholy end of our brave setting out; and everybody blamed everyone else. Jeremy Stickles was wounded (I was glad to be able to drag him from the battlefield), so that there was none left to lead us, and the attack which had begun with such high hopes ended in utter defeat, leaving the Doones more powerful than ever.

Almost all of us, Somerset or Devon men, were stricken by what had happened, and I found no solace even in the work of the farm for many weeks afterwards. And, added to this unhappiness, there came messages from London—the result of the report Jeremy Stickles had sent to the Court of Chancery about Lorna's believed ancestry—that she should be sent to give evidence in the matter of the estate of the Earl of Dugal, which was rightly hers. My thoughts were a mixture of sadness and happiness at the turn of fortune that had come to her. I was loth to let her go, but knew that she must, and I rode with her and Gwenny some miles upon the way, not knowing if ever I should see her again, now that she was likely to be a grand lady in her own right and no longer branded with the name of Doone.

All our neighbourhood was surprised that the Doones had not ere now attacked and made an end of us. For we lay almost at their mercy, the troopers having gone, and they having seen that we were not united enough to take away their power. The reason, as we were to learn later, was this: they were preparing to meet another and more powerful assault. They were assured in their own minds that their repulse of the King's troops could not be overlooked when brought before the authorities. And no doubt they were right, for although conflicts in the government had delayed the matter, yet positive orders had been issued, that these outlaws should at any price be brought to justice; when the sudden death of King Charles the Second threw all things into confusion, and all minds into a panic.

Almost before we had put off the mourning, which as loyal subjects we kept for the King, three months and a week; rumours of disturbances, of plottings, and of outbreak, began

to stir among us. We heard of fighting in Scotland and buying of ships on the Continent, and of arms in Dorset and Somerset; and we kept our beacon in readiness to give signal of a landing; or rather the soldiers did so. For we, having trustworthy reports that the new King had been to High Mass in the Abbey of Westminster, making all the Bishops go with him, and all the Guards in London, and then tortured all the Protestants who dared to wait outside, moreover had received from the Pope a flower grown in the Virgin Mary's garden, and warranted to last for ever, we of the moderate party, hearing all this, and ten times as much, and having no love for this sour James, such as we had for the lively Charles, were ready to wait for what might happen, rather than care about stopping it. Therefore, we listened to rumours gladly, and shook our heads with gravity, and predicted, every man something, but scarce any two the same. Nevertheless, in our part, things went on as usual until the middle of June was nigh. We ploughed the ground and sowed the corn, and tended the cattle, and heeded everyone his neighbour's business, as carefully as previously; and the only thing that moved us much was a sudden change in the weather.

But when I was down, one Saturday, at the blacksmith's forge by Brendon, round the corner came a man upon a piebald horse. He waved a blue flag, and shouted, "Monmouth and the Protestant faith! Monmouth and no Popery! Monmouth, the good King's eldest son! Down with the black usurper!"

For the next fortnight, we were daily troubled with conflicting statements, each man relating what he desired, rather than what he had right, to believe. We were told that the Duke had been proclaimed King of England in every town of Dorset and Somerset; that he had won a great battle at Axminster, and another at Bridport. Then we heard that he had been vanquished and put to flight. Worst of all, my cousin, Tom Faggus, joined the rebels. My sister Annie was stricken at the news and begged me to fetch him back. And to influence me to go she had done an amazing thing. Making herself look as ugly as possible she had gone to the Doones and told them that she needed their word to leave Plover's Barrows in peace while I was away. With the courage of a woman in love she had gone to the Counsellor (he who had told her the

way to make cream come to get Lorna's diamonds) and told her story. There must have been some streak of chivalry in the old man, for he sent her back with a piece of paper which she now gave to me.

It was a formal undertaking, on the part of the Doones, not to attack the farm, or molest any of the inmates, during the absence of John Ridd on a special errand. The document was signed by the Counsellor, and many other Doones; whether Carver's name was there I could not say; as, of course, he would not sign it under the name of Carver, and I had never heard Lorna say to what (if any) he had been baptized. In the face of a deed such as this, I could no longer refuse to go, and right early in the morning I was off.

If I set down all the things that happened to me on this adventure it is likely that my readers might exclaim, "What ails the man? Knows he not that men of real understanding have told us all we care to hear of that miserable business?" Fearing to meet with such rebuffs I will try to set down only what is needful for my story. I reached Bridgwater on a Sunday night. The town was full of the Duke's soldiers—if men may be called so who have never been drilled nor had fired a gun. I looked in vain among this rabble for Tom Faggus, and then, being weary, went to sleep at a tavern. It was hardly dawn when I was awoken by the noise of battle. I took my horse and set off. All the hours of that long day I rode hither and thither, until I came to that part which they call Sedgemoor. Would that I had never been there! Often in the lonely hours, even now it haunts me: would, far more, that the piteous thing had never been done in England! Flying men, flung back from dreams of victory and honour, only glad to have the luck of life and limbs to fly with, mud-bedraggled, foul with slime, reeking with sweat and blood, which they could not stop to wipe, cursing, with their pumped-out lungs, every stick that hindered them, or gory puddle that slipped the step, scarcely able to leap over the corpses that had dragged to die. And to say how the corpses lay; some, as far as death in sleep; with the smile of placid valour, and of noble manhood, hovering yet on the silent lips. These had bloodless hands put upwards, white as wax and firm as death, clasped (as on a monument) in prayer for dear ones left behind, or in high

thanksgiving. And of these men there was nothing in their broad blue eyes to fear. But others were of different sort; simple fellows unused to pain, accustomed to the billhook, perhaps, or rasp of the knuckles in a quickset hedge, or making some to-do at breakfast, over a thumb cut in sharpening a scythe, and expecting their wives to make more to-do. Yet here lay these poor chaps, dead; dead, after a deal of pain, with little mind to bear it, and a soul they had never thought of; gone, their God alone knows whither.

Amid that pitiful shambles stood Tom Faggus's strawberry roan which I recognised. She whinnied to me and led me through the green fields just as, in the distance, the soldiers of the King charged and put the last ragged remnants of Monmouth's army into flight. I found Tom lying wounded in a cow byre. I tended him, put him on his horse and bade him flee, for I knew there would be short shrift for any survivor of Monmouth's army, hurt or whole, that the victorious troops might find as they counted the dead and booty. My job was done and I lay me down to rest with a thankful heart.

My sleep was a short one. A sound stirred me, and when I opened my eyes it was to find myself surrounded by soldiers.

Their Colonel rode towards me and said, "Who is this young fellow we have here? Speak up sirrah; what art thou, and how much will thy mother pay for thee, a rebel who ought to be hanged from that barren tree to make it fruitful?"

"My mother will pay naught for me," I answered; "so please you, I am no rebel; but an honest farmer, and well-proved of loyalty."

My words angered the officer, and he told his men to throw ropes around me, telling others to raise their pieces and despatch a rebel to the Hades where he belonged. While he was preparing to give the order the hoofs of a horse dashed out on the road, and a horseman threw himself between me and the gun-muzzles.

"How now Captain Stickles?" cried the officer; "how dare you come betwixt me and my lawful prisoner?"

The good Jeremy, to whom I shall be thankful all my life for this brave act, whispered in the soldier's ear. I could not catch the rights of it, but I fancied I heard the name of Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys. Whatever was said, the officer's mien changed.

"Then I leave him in your hands, Captain Stickles," he said, with a smile of baffled malice; "and I hold you answerable for his custody and deliverance in London."

"I will answer for him," replied my friend and saviour. "John Ridd, you are my prisoner. Follow me, John Ridd." Obediently I went. And once more my journey was to London. The sight of the capital warmed my heart with various emotions such as a cordial man must draw from the heart of all humanity. What moved me most was that here my Lorna lived—and perhaps thought now and then of the days at the farm. I was under parole to Master Stickles, so that I had freedom to walk about, though the time hung heavily with no man's work for me to do. I hoped that it might be possible to glimpse Lorna walking among the people of fashion, though this did not at first occur. Nevertheless I did hear of her from the worthy furrier in whose house I lodged. By virtue of his trade he was admitted into noble life to take measurements and show patterns, and I soon found, by hints, that he was acquainted with her.

"Perhaps you think, Master Ridd, that because her ladyship, Lady Lorna Dugal, is of Scottish origin, as the Court has now well proved is the case, therefore her birth is not as high as of our English nobility. If you think so, you are wrong, sir. Her mother was of the very noblest race, the Lords of Lorne; higher even than the great Argyle. And her father was descended from King Dugal, who fought against Alexander the Great."

This news, while it pleased me, made me think that the marriage of which I constantly dreamed would never be. Nevertheless, I still hoped that we could meet and talk. From the furrier I discovered that the nobleman, to whose charge Lady Lorna had been committed by the Court of Chancery, was Earl Brandir, her poor mother's uncle. This nobleman had a country house near the village of Kensington, where Lorna now lived, when she was not in attendance on the Queen, to whose retinue she had been attached on account of her beauty.

Now, since the King had begun to attend Mass in the chapel at Whitehall he had given orders that the doors should be thrown open so that the citizens could attend if they wished.

The worthy furrier, having influence with the doorkeepers, kindly obtained admittance for me in the ante-chamber.

When the King and Queen crossed the threshold, a mighty flourish of trumpets arose, and a waving of banners. Many Knights were in attendance on the King, and then followed the Queen with her ladies. All looked very lovely, but none more than my own beloved Lorna. She entered modestly and shyly, with her eyes on the ground. The way she walked and the flowing of her hair would show, at a distance of a hundred yards, that she could be none but Lorna Doone—Lorna of my early love; in the days when she blushed when she saw me; but now the Lady Lorna Dugal; as far beyond reproach as above my poor affection. Would she see me, or would she pass? Was there instinct in our love? She did see me, and made me a courtly bow; and the colour of her cheeks was nearly as deep as that of my own. The service went on, and presently a beadle approached me and gave me a note. I will not expose to every man who has bought this book all that it says. Suffice it is for the reader to know that my love told me, in her letter, just to come and see her.

This I did on the very next day. When I came to Earl Brandir's house, my natural modesty forbade me to appear at the front door; therefore I went by the entrance for servants and retainers, and who should open the door for me but Gwenny, and very surprised was she to see me. She took me to a small room, where Lorna soon came.

Like a maid, with skill and sense checking violent impulse, she remained at the door for a second; and then she came to me. The hand she offered I raised to my lips, and then her eyes gleamed up at me. "Is that all?" she whispered. In another instant we were in each other's arms.

We had much to tell, and one trouble was quickly cleared up. The letters for which I had hoped had been written, but Gwenny, proud of her mistress' exalted position, had not given them to the messengers to take. She was so confused when her deceit was discovered that we could not mar the happiness of this day by reproaching her too much. Then Lorna told me how kind the Earl was to her, and how he knew all about the way I had taken Lorna from the Doones. He had said that he hoped to see me before he died, he being an old man and

stricken. Before I left that evening I went to the part of the house where he lay in bed to pay my respects.

It was a large old house and, as a servant had been sent some time before with a message to which the Earl had replied telling the time I could come, I went alone down the dark old passages. When I came to the door of the room, being myself in shadow, I saw two men just inside the door, while another was holding a pistol laid to the night cap of his Lordship. I did not stop to think, but went straight for the man with the pistol, and stretched him on the floor. The other two men rushed at me, but these townsmen were no match for a son of Somerset, and I quickly overcame them. When I had called the servants and handed the robbers over, and introduced myself to the Earl, I marvelled at how easy my victory had been. That it was greater than I knew I was to learn on the next day, when the three criminals were taken before a Justice of the Peace. The merit of having caught some robbers would never have raised me a step in the State, but when people in the court recognised them as companions of men who had plotted the insurrection against the King, then my modest fight became of Royal importance, and the Magistrate took care that the affair should be laid before his Majesty.

In the course of that same afternoon I was sent for to go to the Palace. I was shown in at once, and made the best bow I could, though I could not advance any further, so nervous was I. But his Majesty advanced towards me to put me at my ease.

"Now John Ridd," he said, "thou hast done a great service to the realm. It was good to save Earl Brandir; but it was great service to catch two of the vilest bloodhounds ever laid on by heretics. Now ask us anything in reason; thou canst carry any honour. What is thy chief ambition, lad?"

"Well," said I, after thinking a little and meaning to make the most of it, "my mother always used to think that having been schooled at Tiverton I was worthy of a coat of arms. And that is what she longs for."

"A good lad," said the King with a smile; "and what is thy condition in life?"

"I am a freeholder," I answered in my confusion, "ever since the time of King Alfred. A Ridd was with him in the Isle of Athelney, and we hold our farm by gift from him. We have

KENILWORTH

by

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was called to the bar in 1792. He devoted much of his leisure to the exploration of the Scottish Border country and in 1805 his first considerable work, the romantic poem "Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published. He then became partner to James Ballantyne, the printer. Eclipsed in a measure by Byron as a poet, he turned his attention to the novel. In 1826 his financial ruin was brought about. Henceforth he worked heroically, shortening his own life in order to meet his creditors. "Kenilworth" appeared in 1821.

"SO you're Michael Lambourne!" exclaimed the landlord of the Black Bear at Cumnor. "Mike! My rascally nephew! Returned from the wars a grown man. But thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hangman, was merciful in his office!"

Giles Gosling's nephew swung his riding cloak aside, revealing a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, as he quaffed his sack.

"You jest, uncle," he replied, leaning back against the wall and surveying the several persons seated in the inn parlour. "What of the friends of my youth? Does Tony-Fire-the-Faggot still dwell hereabouts?"

"Ay, but call him not Tony-Fire-the-Faggot least you brook a stab!" said the landlord. "He's a good Protestant now, and prospered, to boot. Do you recall Cumnor Place, the old mansion house? There he lives now, and has little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor. His wife is dead, leaving him a slip of a daughter, and he lives alone with her, save for the beautiful stranger."

"Aha! And who is she?" cried Michael Lambourne.

"Why, I wot not," answered mine host, "save men say she is as beautiful as an angel. But none has seen her close up."

One of the guests at the inn, a gentleman twixt twenty-five and thirty, crossed over and joined in the conversation.

"Ah, Master Tressilian," said the landlord. "My nephew, Michael Lambourne, evinces an interest in the fair stranger at Cumnor Place. Come! Let us drink a potion!"

"Methinks I'll call on friend Tony Foster to-morrow," said the tall soldier. "He would welcome an old friend—and maybe introduce the lovely lady as well! What say, friend?"

"I say I will accompany thee," replied Tressilian. "The expedition is after mine own liking."

And so next morning the two set off and arrived at the ancient mansion occupied by Anthony Foster. They rode through the thickly wooded park and, arriving at the huge door, Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly on it. The sour-visaged domestic who answered took them into a stone-paved parlour, little furnished, and that most rudely.

When Anthony Foster at last shuffled in, Tressilian saw he was an ugly personage of middle stature, with his hair escaping in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and dressed in a doublet of russet leather. He enquired their business.

"Why, dear friend and ingie, Tony Foster!" exclaimed Lambourne, shaking him by the hand. "How fares you after so long? What! have you forgotten your friend, your gossip Michael Lambourne?"

"Michael Lambourne!" said Foster, "and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?"

"*Voto a Dios*," answered Lambourne, "I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think."

"Why, thou gallows-bird—thou jail-rat—thou friend of the hangman and his customers," replied Foster, "hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from anyone whose neck is beyond the compass of a Tyburn tippet?"

"It may be as you say," said Lambourne, "but I would prefer to speak with you alone in another chamber. May we leave my friend here awhile?"

Foster looked at him earnestly for a minute, setting his teeth and compressing his lips, like one who endeavours to suppress some violent emotion.

"Come with me," he said at last. "Meanwhile, I pray you, sir, to abide us in this apartment."

Tressilian nodded as they walked out and composed himself on a seat.

Foster led Lambourne into a room of greater extent than the first, but one showing great neglect. It contained the remains of a vast library, a collection of books which seemed to have incurred the hostility of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes and left only their costly clasps, mantled with dust and cobwebs.

"The men who wrote those books," said Lambourne, "little thought whose keeping they were to fall into."

"Pshaw, pshaw," answered Foster, "they are Popish trash, every one of them—private studies of the mumping old Abbot of Abingdon, who lately owned this mansion. The nineteenthly of a pure gospel sermon were worth a cartload of such rakings from the kennel of Rome."

"Gad-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-Faggot!" said Lambourne, by way of reply.

Foster scowled darkly at him. "Hark thee, friend Mike; forget that name, if you would not have our newly revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death."

"Why," said Michael Lambourne, "you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops who were burnt at the stake."

"That," said his comrade, "was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. There has been a change since you last knew the English world."

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

"By the holy Cross of Abingdon," exclaimed Anthony Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, "I am a ruined man!"

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne.

* * * * *

When Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eyes followed them forth from the apartment with a glance of contempt.

"These are thy associates, Amy," he communed to himself, "from whom I will save thee and from thy betrayer—I will

restore thee to thy parent. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but——”

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie; he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side-door, he recognised the object of his search.

“Amy, Amy!” said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone.

At the sound of his voice, the lady staggered back, turning as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian, seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not occur again, said, “Amy, fear me not.”

“Why should I fear you?” said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her face, which was now covered crimson,—“why should I fear you Mr. Tressilian?—or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, and unwished for?”

“Your dwelling, Amy!” said Tressilian. “Alas! is a prison your dwelling?—a prison, guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer!”

“This house is mine,” said Amy, “mine while I choose to inhabit it—if it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who will gainsay me?”

“Your father, maiden,” answered Tressilian, “who sent me hither. He is broken-hearted and ill. He calls for you, nay, he sent me in his name to fetch you back home to him. Amy, in the name of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me!”

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arms, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrank back from his grasp, and uttered the scream which brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

“Madam, what makes you here out of bounds?” exclaimed Foster in a tone betwixt entreaty and command. “Retire—retire—and Mike, draw and rid us of this knave!”

“Not I, on my soul,” replied Lambourne; “he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by the cutter’s law, at least till we meet again—but hark ye, my Cornish comrade, make yourself scarce—depart—vanish.”

"Away, base groom!" said Tressilian—"And you, madam, fare you well—what life lingers in your father's bosom will leave him at the news I have to tell."

On leaving the grounds, Tressilian lost his path, and found himself by a postern-door which opened through the wall, into the open country. He was just about to pass through, when the bolt revolved and a cavalier entered, muffled in his riding cloak.

The recognition was mutual. "Varney!" exclaimed one. "Tressilian!" the other.

"What make you here?" was the stern question put by the stranger, when the moment of surprise was past.

"Nay, Varney," replied Tressilian, "what make *you* here? Draw, dog, and defend thyself!"

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke, but Varney only laid a hand on his hilt. "Thou art mad, Tressilian," he replied, "I do no harm to Mistress Amy Robsart, and in truth I were somewhat loath to injure you in this cause——"

"I would fain have better evidence than thy word!" said Tressilian.

At which Varney drew his sword. But Lambourne arrived at that moment, and went between them.

"Come, come, comrades," said Lambourne. "Enough of this. You are not welcome here, Master Tressilian—let us be jogging—the Black Bear calls."

"Off, abject!" cried Tressilian, pushing Lambourne aside. "Varney, farewell—we shall meet again where there are none to come betwixt us." So saying, he turned round and departed through the postern-door.

* * * * *

Four apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendour. Workmen sent from London, and not permitted to leave the place until finished, had converted the apartments from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic building, into the semblance of a royal palace. The walls were hung with the finest tapestries from the looms of Flanders, and the floors covered with Spanish carpets. In the principal apartment was a chair of State raised upon a dais, surmounted by a canopy. This, as well as the cushions, side-

curtains, and the very foot-cloth was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated was seated in this withdrawing-room admiring her new apartments with ecstatic joy, and feeling exalted by her lover's taste and lavish bestowing. For Amy was the Countess Amy, exalted to that rank by her private but solemn union with England's proudest earl.

As she sat there, the folding doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment. The Countess threw herself in the arms of the noble stranger who entered, exclaiming, "At length—at length, thou art come!"

Varney, who had followed his lord in, discreetly withdrew, leaving the Earl of Leicester to return his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardour.

"I see that thou, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?"

The lady smiled at the Earl as he led her to the chair of State. "The gaiety of this rich lodging exceeds my imagination as much as it does my desert," she said. "But shall not your wife one day be surrounded with the honour, which arises neither from the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment, nor from the silk and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England's noblest earl?"

"One day?" said her husband—"Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen. But meanwhile, it cannot be. We who toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand—we dare make no halt until some projecting rock affords us a secure footing and resting-place—If we pause sooner, we slide down by our own weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not high enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage would be to declare my ruin."

The Countess looked downcast, and then said, "I see, my lord. Then I have a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee."

"Let both be for to-morrow, my love," replied the Earl. "Let us first eat. I have ridden far and fast, a cup of wine would not be unacceptable."

But next morning, when the Earl went to the apartment to say his farewells, he refused quite firmly to allow the Countess to visit her father.

"Your father is an honourable man," said the Earl. "But would you not remember Tressilian? I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than he!"

"And why, my Lord?" said the Countess, shuddering slightly at the tone in which he spoke. "Why do you think thus hardly of him?"

"Because he stands high in the opinion of this Radcliffe, this Sussex, who is my greatest rival at the court of our suspicious mistress. Nay—if he had knowledge of us, he would use it to his best advantage and I would be an outcast forever. I seek no one's ruin, but if this Tressilian thrusts himself on my private secrecy, he had better look well to his future walk. The bear brooks no one to cross his awful path."

The Countess turned very pale. But thus saying, the Earl at length took farewell.



The Queen sent a message to the Earl of Sussex requesting his presence, and was much displeased to receive a reply that the Earl had rejected her messenger. But the rejection of the physician sent to enquire of his health, had not been the Earl's doing, but that of one of his zealous followers. Sussex instantly sent Blount, his master of horse, and Raleigh, to explain to his Sovereign.

The royal barge was about to leave from the Palace of Greenwich when they arrived. The Queen's watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did sit waiting. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace-gate for the Queen coming forth.

Young Raleigh had never yet approached so near the person of his Sovereign, as he did when the gates opened and the ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band

of Gentlemen Pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a Sovereign was called beauty.

The young cavalier pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept pulling him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently. Unbonneting at the same time, he fixed his eager eyes on the Queen's approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity, and modest yet ardent admiration. Thus the young adventurer stood full in Elizabeth's gaze.

The night had been rainy, and just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to ensure her stepping over it dry-shod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The Queen was confused, and blushing in her turn, nodded her head; hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

"Come along, Sir Coxcomb," said Blount; "your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot."

"This cloak," said the youth, "shall never be brushed while it is in my possession."

Just as they were about to move on, a messenger came and told the young gallant that he was required. He was ushered down into the royal barge and into the presence of the Queen herself, seated surrounded by members of her court, and seemingly amused.

She asked Raleigh what he required as a reward for his trouble, a new suit or gold. But the youth waited modestly for her to finish. Then he said, "Only permission, madam—if it is not asking too high an honour—permission to wear the cloak which did you such trifling service."

"Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy?" said the Queen.

"It is no longer mine," said Walter; "when your Majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner."

The Queen again blushed; "Heard you the like, my Lords?" she said covering her confusion by laughing. "Whence come you, boy?"

"From the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your Grace, come hither with a message to your Majesty."

Elizabeth's expression changed and became haughty. "My Lord of Sussex," she said, "has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. What know you of this matter?"

"That my master was not to blame, your Grace," replied Raleigh, bowing very low; "the full and sole blame is mine."

"What? was it thou?" said the Queen. "What could occasion such boldness in one who seems so devoted?"

"Only that my master is under the care of a leech by whose advice he hath greatly profited," said the youth. "Who had issued a command that the noble Earl was not to be disturbed on pain of his life."

So impressed was the Queen by Raleigh's bearing and forthright answers, that she forgave him and sent him off with a jewel of gold.

* * * *

Both Leicester and Sussex were called to attend the Queen's court together. Both the rival statesmen knew the Queen was going to take up the matter of their rivalry before them, and she herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from a collision of two such fiery spirits. The band of Gentlemen Pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the Thames from London.

The eventful hour at length approached, and, each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival earls entered the Palace-yard of Greenwich at noon precisely.

Both earls moved slowly and stately towards the presence-room where the Queen, attired with more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects.

"My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex," said the Queen, "I command you both to be friends with each other, or by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you! My Lords, let me see you join hands and forget your animosities."

Unwillingly, yet under the threat of their Sovereign, the men both offered the other his hand.

"Good," said the Queen, "now My Lord of Leicester, have you a gentleman in your household, called Varney?"

"Yes, Gracious Madam," replied Leicester.

"I have it then that he hath seduced and abducted the fair daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart, and secreted her away to some house—My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deathly pale?"

"No, Gracious Madam," said Leicester; and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

"Then call this Varney forth—and the Tressilian mentioned in the petition I have received," said the Queen. "Let them both come before us."

When the two were brought, Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the Queen. When he saw Tressilian, he perceived the peril of the situation. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous.

"Fall back, my Lords," said the Queen, to those about her. "I wish to converse with this man alone. Now, sirrah, is it true that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

Varney knelt down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition, "I love her very dearly, Madam, but her father had promised her to another whom I see here present, one Master Edmund Tressilian. I had no option but to secrete her away. It was done with her complete agreement, of course."

"Soh!" said Elizabeth. "But what right have you to break her father's contract?"

"Madam," said Varney, "it is vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or to one who never yields to passion."

Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled despite herself. "Thou

art a marvellous impudent knave—Art thou married to the girl?"

"Yes," said Varney, after a moment's hesitation.

"Thou false villain!" said Leicester, who had been trying to hear the low conversation from the side.

"Nay, stand fast, My Lord," said the Queen. "I will judge this man, not thou. My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing—we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us. And the wife of this Varney—see she is brought before us. And see thou, My Lord of Sussex, that Tressilian attends you there."

Sussex looked embarrassed and Leicester for a moment looked staggered, but he recovered, and bowed to his Sovereign's commands.

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It was twilight of a Summer night, and all were in anxious expectation of the Queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and a profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen and barrels of ale set abroach in different places on the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty towards the Queen.

"The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!" The acclamation was caught up and roared vociferously across the countryside. It spread like wild-fire to the Castle and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the Castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements; but the noise of the drums and trumpets was but faintly heard above the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

Preceded with torchmen, the cavalcade wound into the Castle, with the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, the central figure on a milk-white horse which she rode with peculiar grace and beauty. The ladies of the court rode beside her Majesty, dressed in

careful manner to avoid in any way approaching the magnificence of their Sovereign.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, mounted on a coal-black steed. He was a proud figure, and none in England, or perhaps in Europe, could be more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship. But some of the Earl's personal attendants remarked that he looked unusually pale, despite the grandeur of the occasion.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and kept a careful watch on the Earl. For he knew that to-day would sorely try Leicester, and should he fail, then Varney would be forfeit as well. He had acquainted the Earl of his intention of continuing the guise of Amy's lover, and intended that the Queen should be put off by a tale of indisposition.

As the Queen entered the Castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to the strains of soft and delicious music, she was brought to the great hall, where a state canopy overshadowed by a royal throne, had been made ready. Beside it was a door, leading to the apartments decorated with the utmost magnificence for the Queen and her ladies.

The Earl, having handed Elizabeth up to the throne, knelt before her and kissed the hand she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mixed with an air of loyal devotion. So handsome did he look, that the Queen was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer; and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near, as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair. She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation.

After which, Leicester excused himself, and shortly returned in a dress of white velvet, slashed to the middle thigh and lined with cloth of silver, over which he wore a rich loose robe of white satin with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter round his knee completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but, in point of

splendour and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. "We have one piece of royal justice," she said, "to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people."

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands, and a similar cold fit came over Varney when he perceived of what the Queen was speaking.

"I regret, Gracious madam, that the lady of whom you speak is not present," said the Earl. "Varney—step forward—this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady cannot attend your Royal presence."

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what he firmly indeed believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for he dare not, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait upon the Queen.

"Here," said he, "are attestations from a most learned physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout Protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose home she is at present bestowed, that she labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this Castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford."

"This alters the matter," said the Queen, taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents—"Let Tressilian come forward—. Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart on this Amy Robsart, or Varney. We cannot, unfortunately, command the affections of a giddy girl, but here are testimonials of the physician and gentleman under whose care she is, saying her illness prevents her attendance on us here."

"Under your Majesty's favour," said Tressilian hastily, and in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the Queen, forgetting, in part his position, "these certificates speak not the truth."

"How, sir!" said the Queen—"Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! What causes you to speak thus? Hast thou proof of these accusations? Are these documents then false?"

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Tressilian from speaking. "So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here present, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and character."

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy independant franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be in his own handwriting.

"And now, Master Tressilian, this matter is therefore ended," said the Queen, "we will do something ere the night is old to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty to him, and may now withdraw."

Tressilain again endeavoured to address the Queen, when Raleigh, with Blount's assistance, interfered, and half-dragged, half-carried him out of the presence-chamber and took him to the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers, where he was placed under guard to prevent him returning.

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"It is a melancholy matter," said the Queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, "to see a wise and learned man's wit thus pitifully unsettled. But his accusations are without base, and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, in honour that we are a guest under your lordship's roof, and on behalf of your faithful servant Varney, and most especially in honour of the good old knight Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he has married, we trust that the mark of grace we are about to confer may reconcile him to his son-in-law—. Your sword, my Lord of Leicester."

The Earl unbuckled his sword, and taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth. She took it, and said: "Richard Varney, come forth and kneel down. In the name of God and Saint George, we dub thee knight! Be faithful, brave and fortunate. Arise, Sir Richard Varney."

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the Sovereign who had done him so much honour.

That night, when the festivities were done, Leicester welcomed Varney in his own apartment.

"How! Sir Richard," said Leicester, smiling, as his servant attended him in his bedroom, "your rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance."

"I would disown the rank, my lord," said Varney, "if it was to remove me from your presence. Here is your gown, sire."

He officiously assisted his lord to bed and as he did so, the Earl let his thoughts wander aloud. "I hear there is talk that men say I could marry the Queen if I would?" he said quietly.

"It is your speech, my lord, not mine," answered Varney, "but whose soever by the speech, it is the thought of ninety-nine out of a hundred men throughout broad England."

"Ay, but," said Leicester, turning himself on his bed, "the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be overleaped."

"It must my lord, if the stars speak true," said Varney composedly. "And I have heard that many on earth wish it too."

"Thou art right," said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch, "—Earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the reformed churches of Germany—from the Low Countries—from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe's safety depends. Spain fears it—but cannot prevent it—and yet thou knowest it is impossible."

"I know not that, my lord," said Varney. "The Countess is indisposed!"

"Villain!" said Leicester, starting up from his couch, and seizing the sword that lay on the table beside him, "go thy thoughts that way?—thou wouldst not do murder!"

"My lord, long live your fair Countess," said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man. "I merely said she was ill. And lovely as she is, she is only mortal, and may die. Then your lordship's hand would become free once more."

"Away, away!" said Leicester. "Let me have no more of this!"

"Another answer," said Varney, as he prepared to leave, "is to keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate. It has been done before, my lord."

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But unbeknown to the Earl of Leicester, his lawful wife was not a great distance off. For, fearful of Varney's attentions in the mansion of Cumnor Place, she had, by the artifice of her maid, Janet, the daughter of Anthony Foster, made good her escape. With the help of a young lad, she had travelled and reached Kenilworth Castle at the height of the revelry. In the press of guests and all their retinue she had been able to secrete herself in a small apartment, to which she had been led by her guide. There she had penned a swift message to Dudley, Earl of Leicester, telling him of her arrival and bidding him come to her when he could.

The Countess slept for several hours, tired out after her long exertions, and awoke to the sound of a bugle, the *reveille*, sounding to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth that the pleasures of the day were to begin with a magnificent stag-hunt. As she rose, there came a slight knock at the door of her apartment.

"Is it thou, my love?" she asked cautiously, unlocking the door.

"Yes, my Countess," murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming "Leicester!" flung her arms round the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

"No—not quite Leicester," answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence—"not quite Leicester, my lovely and most loving Duchess, but as good a man."

With an exertion of force, of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the Countess freed herself from the profane and drunken grasp of the debauchee. Then as his cloak slipped she recognised Varney's profligate servant, the very last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered.

As he made to seize her, she gave a shriek. A jailor, in his apartment below, came running at her cries.

"Good sir, worthy sir!" said the Countess, addressing the jailor. "Do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!"

"Let the woman go, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys," cried the jailor, advancing on the drunken man.

"I'll make a blood-pudding of your midriff first," answered Lambourne laying his left hand on his dagger, but still retaining the Countess with his right—"So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys!"

As he spoke, the Countess twisted herself free, slipping her hand from the glove he held, and darted down the stairs. The garden below, called the Pleasance, offered her shelter, and finding a seat in a mossy bower, she flung herself down, awaiting till Fate should give her some chance of rescue, or of propitiating an intercessor.

It chanced that upon that memorable morning, one of the first who appeared from her Chamber in full array for the chase was England's Maiden Queen. She had not advanced many steps ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase be completed, to view the Pleasance. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, though they lost not sight of their Queen, fell back apace in order to leave them to talk undisturbed.

Leicester spoke earnestly to her, while the chase gathered in the Courtyard outside. The Queen—an accomplished and handsome woman—had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed; but the Earl, in his importunity, broke into the language of love itself.

"No, Dudley," said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents—"No. I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her Sovereign. Go, Leicester, leave me—let no one intrude on my privacy."

When she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air, leaving the Queen to ponder alone. And as she approached the grotto, she became aware of a female figure who was seated therein. Elizabeth thought at first it was a statue, cunningly fashioned, until Amy rose and came towards her. When the unfortunate Countess recognised her Sovereign, she dropped on her knee, and, clasping her

palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

"Stand up, damsel," she said, "what wouldst thou have with us?"

"Your protection, Madam," faltered forth the unhappy petitioner. "I beseech your gracious protection against one Varney."

"Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester?"

"I—I was his prisoner—but I broke forth——"

"Then you are Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?" demanded Elizabeth. "But who dost thou love then, this Tressilian or this same Varney, whom thou didst marry?"

Amy sprang to her feet. "I am not the wife of that contemptible villain!" she cried. "I am not the wife of Varney!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then demanded: "Speak out then, whose wife or paramour art thou?"

Amy at length uttered in despair, "The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

"The Earl of Leicester!" said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment. "The Earl of Leicester! Woman, come with me, come with me—instantly!"

She dragged after her the terrified Countess and took her to the courtyard, where were assembled the great company to attend her Majesty at the chase, who viewed their approach with amazement.

"Where is my Lord Leicester?" said the Queen in a ringing voice. "Stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

To Leicester, it was as the blast of the last trumpet, but once again he was saved by the cunning Varney, who stood forward before the angry Queen.

"What means this?" demanded Elizabeth imperiously.

Varney, with an air of one altogether overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, saying: "Pardon, my Liege, pardon!—but spare my poor distressed wife. The reason she was not able to come before thee yestereve is now apparent. She is afflicted at times in the head, your Grace, and imagines things."

"She says she hates you and that Leicester knows why," replied the Queen, looking at the Earl, who stood with bowed head. "Is she then distraught? Her whole demeanour bears it out—I found her moping in the corner of yonder grotto. At first her tirade had me deceived."

The poor girl stood silent, for she knew that if she spoke again, her husband's fortune would be as nothing. Elizabeth had raised him up to his present position, and would as easily pull him down if she knew of his relationship with Amy. The girl therefore, stood silent and suffered herself to be led away.

"My Lord of Leicester," said the Queen, "you have a right to be offended at us for our thoughts."

Leicester smoothed his brow, and made reply. But the shock he had undergone that day, left him shaken. Then the bugles sounded, and he had to give his mind to the chase.

* * * * *

Later that day, after a successful morning's sport, Leicester found himself alone with Varney, from whom he learned of Amy's escape from the mansion. Foster had come, in terror of his life, to bring the tidings to Kenilworth.

"She had all she wished for," said Dudley, "the proudest name in England and all I asked was for her to have patience. Come, we will see her now."

The Countess Amy, with her hair and garments dishevelled, was seated upon a sort of couch in a room which had been turned to her prison. The entrance of the Earl and Varney brought her to her feet. "Dudley!" she cried. "Dudley! Art thou come at last?" And with the speed of lightning, she flew to her husband, unheeding of Varney's presence.

Leicester received and repayed her caresses with fondness, and his anger at her disobedience abated gradually. But he remembered the danger of her being in the same castle as the Queen, and spoke of her going away with Varney for a while.

"How, my Lord of Leicester!" said his lady, disengaging herself from his embraces; "I cannot go on thus deceiving and deceiving. Take me to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne—say, that in a moment of infatuation you gave your hand to me. Then, if law or power require it, you can put me from you and

can then with honour withdraw to hide a grieved and broken heart in the shades."

There was so much dignity and so much tenderness in this speech that it moved all that was generous and deep in her husband's soul.

"I not worthy of thee, Amy!" he said. "I must leave the Court, I must disentangle all the meshes of my own deceitful policy—I have friends who will stand by me. Fear not, Amy; thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of thy name!"

He embraced her fervently, then left with Varney. The latter as he left the room, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression.

"She has brought me to a crisis," he muttered when alone. "She or I are lost. It is now decided—she or I must *perish*."

When he and the Earl were once more returned to their quarters, he allowed his master to talk over the possibilities of revolt. But when Leicester spoke of overpowering the Pensioners and the Yeomen of the Guard, Varney spoke up.

"Let me remind you, my lord," said Varney, with an appearance of deep and melancholy interest, "that you are giving me orders to disarm the Queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you will nevertheless be obeyed if you wish it."

"I care not," said Leicester, desperately;—"I care not. Shame is behind me. Ruin is before me. I must press on!"

Here was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words: "It has come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters, or I must speak what I would have buried in the deepest oblivion."

"What is it that thou sayest, or would have say?" asked the Earl. "We have no time for wasting words, when time calls for action."

"My speech is short, but difficult, my lord," said Varney. "It is about the cause of your trouble, the Countess Amy. I fear that she loves the fellow Tressilian and, indeed, I have proof that he has been visiting her secretly."

"What! Speak, man!" cried the Earl, starting to his feet. "If you lie, I'll have your life! Speak!"

"My lord," said Varney, "unfortunately I speak truth. I met this Tressilian at the postern-gate of Cumnor Place one

day, coming out. If Lambourne, who I after took as my servant, had not come upon us, I would have run him through."

Leicester seemed struck dumb with surprise. "What other evidence hast thou, Varney, save thine own assertion?—for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily. What further proof?"

"This, my lord," said Varney, holding out a glove. "This was found outside Tressilian's apartment here in this castle last night."

He gave the glove, which had the Bear and Ragged Staff, the Earl's impress, embroidered upon it with seed-pearls.

"I recognise it," said the Earl. "They were my own gift! Oh, what a fool I have been to be thus deceived! To think I contemplated rebellion to retain her love. Speak no more of her to me, Varney—I will have her blood!"

"My lord," replied Varney, "the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language."

"I say, speak not of her!" replied Leicester; "she has dishonoured me—she would have murdered me by appearing before the Queen to-day—that was all a cunning trick. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws of God and Man!"

* * * * *

It was afterwards remembered that during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanour.

"My lord," said Varney, during the course of the evening, "the Queen's physician has seen her. He says she is labouring under a delusion. The opportunity is therefore free to remove her from the Castle."

"But Tressilian?" said Leicester.

"He will not know of her departure for some time," replied Varney; "it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for."

"No, by my soul," answered Leicester; "I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand! He shall be my own victim."

"As you will, my lord," said Varney gravely, "but I must crave your signet-ring in token to those of your servants whom I must employ, that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid."

Leicester drew off his signet-ring and gave it to Varney with a haggard countenance and said, in a half whisper, "What thou dost, do quickly."

So pleasing were the revels and the flattery that Leicester poured into her willing ears, that the castle bell had sounded midnight ere Elizabeth retired from the company. Her departure was the signal for the breaking up of the company and when the Earl was alone with his thoughts his heart was wrung within him. He was dismayed on sending for Varney to learn that his servant had left the Castle earlier with three persons, one of them in a litter.

"Do any of his attendants remain behind?" asked Leicester.

"Michael Lambourne, my lord," said his valet.

"Then bid him hither instantly. I have a message for his master."

The Earl seized writing materials and hastily traced these words :—

"Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the matter in your care, and strictly command you to return, as soon as you can safely bestow that with which you are intrusted in a safe place. Requiring your strict obedience in these things, we rest your assured good friend and master.

"R. LEICESTER."

As Leicester finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid-thigh, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet.

"I have heard of thee," said the Earl; "men say you are too much given to brawling and to wassail. But to-night I have a message of the utmost urgency to your master. Deliver this note in the hands of Sir Richard Varney and it shall do thee good."

"I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh," answered Lambourne and immediately took his departure.

"She must not suffer for my ends," groaned the Earl in anguish. "I will not stoop to bear the disgrace. No—one victim is enough for me—Tressilian."

He sought out the Cornishman from his apartment and requested him to don his sword and follow him. The man, already much troubled by Varney's victory over him with the Queen, was loathe to pull a weapon on his host.

"I pray thee, good sir," said Tressilian, "acquaint me with the meaning of this forced duel. I have nought against thee—only against the seducer of the ill-fated Amy. I refer to your servant, Varney."

"You refer to her husband, sir!" cried the Earl. "Know that that Varney is not the husband of the lady. She is the Countess of Leicester, my bride!"

Tressilian staggered back as if struck.

"You!" he whispered. Then he drew his sword. "Have at you, for a black-hearted villain!"

But his arm was held by a lad who rushed from the bushes. "Stop, sirs! 'Tis I who are the cause of this mischief between you. I have here a note from the Countess to you, my lord. I was prevented from delivering it by the servant of Sir Richard Varney who locked me in a room from which I have just escaped."

The lad handed to Dudley the note penned by his wife when she had first arrived at Kenilworth. The Earl saw at once that Tressilian was not the man he wanted but Varney, his trusted Varney!

Tressilian's generous nature was instantly forgiving when he was told of the nature of the note and he turned to the Earl. "My lord," he said, calmly, "I mean you no offence, but my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the Countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person."

"You shall not need, sir," replied the Earl, haughtily; "No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy—to Elizabeth herself I will tell it, and then to Cumnor Place with the speed of life and death!"

* * * * *

Tressilian was called into the Queen's withdrawing apartment with a strong palpitation of heart. Elizabeth was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal. Before the empty chair of state knelt Leicester, his sword laying beside him on the ground.

"Ho, sir," said the Queen, coming close up to Tressilian, "*you* knew of this fair work—*you* are an accomplice in this deception—art dumb, sirrah! thou know'st of this affair—dost thou not?"

"Not, gracious madam," said Tressilian on bended knee, "that this poor lady was the Countess of Leicester."

"Nor shall any one know her as such," said Elizabeth. "I say Dame Amy Dudley—and widow of the traitor Robert Dudley." She turned away and the elder statesmen Lord Burleigh spoke quietly to her. The regal Queen turned with a tear twinkling in her eye and called to all the assembly.

"What, ho! my lords, come all and hear the news—My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband, and England a King. But I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child, whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands."

"For God's sake, madam," said the Earl of Leicester with humility and shame. "Spare me public ridicule. Grant me one favour, let me ride post-haste to Cumnor Place."

"To fetch home your bride belike?" said the Queen. "Nay, not in person, my lord. Tressilian shall go and with him take the youth Raleigh. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen, and bring the lady here with all honour!"

They bowed, and left the presence.

They were some way en route when they came upon Michæl Lambourne lying in the agony of death by the roadside. Catching up with Varney, the messenger had delivered Leicester's message, and when the knight had chosen to ignore the contents, Lambourne had remonstrated with him. Varney drew a pistol, fired but once, and left him for dead. All Lambourne could gasp out to the rescuers before he expired was: "Make haste, or it would be too late."

But too late it was. For when Tressilian reached the mansion, it was to find the mangled yet still warm body of the Countess dashed to the bottom of a secret well by Varney and

Foster. The latter fled but Varney was taken, and he eluded final judgement by taking poison in his cell.

The news of the Countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney in his last declaration had been studious to spare the character of the Earl, the Queen at length took compassion on him and recalled him to court; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and a favourite, and the rest of his career is known to history.

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, settling his estate on Tressilian. But not even this or the promises of favour if he followed the court, could remove his profound melancholy. At length, he himself embarked with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in grief, died before his day in that foreign land.

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

by
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74) was the second son of an Irish clergyman. He entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1744, and graduated B.A. in 1749. He then studied medicine at Edinburgh and at Leyden and wandered about France, Switzerland and Italy. He reached London destitute in 1756, and supported himself with difficulty as a physician, usher and hack writer on Griffiths' monthly review. "The Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in 1766. His first comedy, "The Good-natured Man," was rejected by David Garrick, the actor, but his second comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," was played at Covent Garden in 1773 with immense success. For the manuscript of "The Vicar of Wakefield" Goldsmith received £60.

I WAS ever of opinion, that the honest man who married and brought up a large family did more service than he who continued single, and only talked of population. From this motive, I had scarce taken orders a year before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife, as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but for such qualities as would wear well.

However, we loved each other tenderly, and our fondness increased as we grew old. We had an elegant house situate in a fine country, and a good neighbourhood. As we lived near the road, we often had the traveller or stranger visit us to taste our gooseberry wine, for which we had great reputation. Our cousins, too, even to the fortieth remove, all remembered their affinity, without any help from the herald's office, and came very frequently to see us. Some of them did us no great honour by these claims of kindred; as we had the blind, the maimed, and the halt amongst the number, but never was the family of Wakefield known to turn the traveller or the poor dependent out of doors.

Thus we lived several years in a state of much happiness. My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well-formed and healthy; my sons hardy and active, my daughters beautiful and blooming. In this manner, though I had but six, I considered them as a very valuable present made to my country, and consequently looked upon it as my debtor. Our eldest son was named George, our second child, a girl, was called Olivia. In less than another year we had another daughter, called Sophia. Moses was our next and, after an interval of twelve years, we had two sons more. When our visitors would say, "Well, upon my word, Mrs. Primrose, you, have the finest children in the whole country";—"Ay, neighbour," she would answer, "they are as heaven made them, handsome enough, if they be good enough; for handsome is that handsome does."

My eldest son George was bred at Oxford, as I intended him for one of the learned professions. My second boy Moses, whom I designed for business, received a sort of miscellaneous education at home.

The profits of my living, which amounted to but thirty-five pounds a year, I made over to the orphans and widows of the clergy of our diocese; for, having a sufficient fortune of my own, I was careless of temporalities, and felt a secret pleasure in doing my duty without reward. I also set a resolution of keeping no curate.

Matrimony was always one of my favourite topics, but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of supporting: for I maintained with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the Church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second. I was early initiated into this important dispute. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but alas! they had not, like me, made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared.

It was thus, perhaps, from hearing marriage so often recommended, that my eldest son, just upon leaving college, fixed his affections upon the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, who was a dignitary in the Church and, in circumstances to give her a large fortune. But fortune was her

smallest accomplishment. Miss Arabella Wilmot was allowed by all (except my two daughters) to be completely pretty. As Mr. Wilmot knew that I could make a very handsome settlement on my son, he was not averse to the match; so both families lived together in all that harmony which generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced by experience that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period.

Some months were elapsed in this manner, till at last it was thought convenient to fix a day for the nuptials of the young couple, who seemed earnestly to desire it. During the preparations for the wedding, I need not describe the busy importance of my wife, nor the sly looks of my daughters; in fact, my attention was fixed on another object,—the completing a tract, which I intended shortly to publish, in defence of my favourite principle. As I looked upon this as a masterpiece, both for argument and style, I could not, in the pride of my heart, avoid showing it to my old friend Mr. Wilmot, as I made no doubt of receiving his approbation; but not till too late I discovered that he was most violently attached to the contrary opinion, and with good reason; for he was at that time actually courting a fourth wife. On the day before that appointed for the ceremony, we agreed to discuss the subject at large.

"You might as well advise me to give up my fortune as my argument," said I.

"Your fortune," returned my friend, "I am now sorry to inform you, is almost nothing. The merchant in town, in whose hands your money was lodged, has gone off, to avoid a statute of bankruptcy, and is thought not to have left a shilling in the pound. I was unwilling to shock you or the family with the account till after the wedding."

"Well," returned I, "if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles. I'll go this moment and inform the company of my circumstances."

It would be useless to describe the different sensations of both families when I divulged the news of our misfortune; but what others felt was slight to what the lovers appeared to endure. Mr. Wilmot, who seemed before sufficiently inclined

to break off the match, was, by this blow, soon determined; one virtue he had in perfection, which was prudence, too often the only one that is left us at seventy-two.

The only hope of our family now was, that the report of our misfortune might be malicious or premature; but a letter from my agent in town soon came, with a confirmation of every particular. The loss of fortune to myself alone would have been trifling; the only uneasiness I felt was for my family, who were to be humbled without an education to render them callous to contempt.

Near a fortnight had passed before I attempted to restrain their affliction; for premature consolation is but the remembrancer of sorrow. During this interval, my thoughts were employed on some future means of supporting them; and at last a small curé of fifteen pounds a year was offered me, in a distant neighbourhood, where I could still enjoy my principles without molestation. With this proposal I joyfully closed, having determined to increase my salary by managing a little farm.

Having taken this resolution, my next care was to get together the wreck of my fortune; and, all debts collected and paid, out of fourteen thousand pounds we had but four hundred remaining. My chief attention, therefore, was now to bring down the pride of my family to their circumstances.

As my eldest son was bred a scholar, I determined to send him to town, where his abilities might contribute to our support and his own. My son, after taking leave of his mother and the rest, who mingled their tears with their kisses, came to ask a blessing from me. This I gave him from my heart, and which, added to five guineas, was all the patrimony I had now to bestow.

"You are going, my boy," cried I, "to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you."

As he was possessed of integrity and honour, I was under no apprehensions from throwing him naked into the amphitheatre of life; for I knew he would act a good part whether vanquished or victorious. His departure only prepared the way for our own, which arrived a few days afterwards.

The first day's journey brought us in safety within thirty miles of our future retreat, and we put up for the night at an obscure inn in a village by the way. When we were shown a room, I desired the landlord, in my usual way, to let us have his company, with which he complied, as what he drank would increase the bill next morning. He knew, however, the whole neighbourhood to which I was removing, particularly Squire Thornhill, who was to be my landlord, and who lived within a few miles of the place. This gentleman he described as one who desired to know little more of the world than its pleasures, being particularly remarkable for his attachment to the fair sex.

Though this account gave me some pain, it had a very different effect upon my daughters, whose features seemed to brighten with the expectation of an approaching triumph; nor was my wife less pleased and confident of their allurements and virtue. While our thoughts were thus employed, the hostess entered the room to inform her husband that the strange gentleman, who had been two days in the house, wanted money, and could not satisfy them for his reckoning.

"Want money!" replied the host, "that must be impossible; for it was not later than yesterday he paid three guineas to our beadle to spare an old broken soldier that was to be whipped through the town for dog-stealing."

I begged the landlord would introduce me to a stranger of so much charity as he described. With this he complied, showing in a gentleman who seemed to be about thirty, dressed in clothes that once were laced. His person was well formed, and his face marked with the lines of thinking. Upon the landlord's leaving the room, I could not avoid expressing my concern to the stranger at seeing a gentleman in such circumstances, and offered my purse to satisfy the present demand.

"I take it with all my heart, sir," replied he, "and am glad that a late oversight in giving what money I had about me has shown me that there are still some men like you. I must, however, previously entreat being informed of the name and residence of my benefactor, in order to repay him as soon as possible."

In this I satisfied him fully, not only mentioning my name and late misfortune, but the place to which I was going to remove.

"This," cried he, "happens still more luckily than I hoped for, as I am going the same way myself, having been detained here two days by the floods, which I hope by to-morrow will be found passable."

I testified the pleasure I should have in his company, and my wife and daughters joining in intreaty, he was prevailed upon to stay to supper.

The next morning we all set forward together: my family on horseback, while Mr. Burchell, our new companion, walked along the footpath by the road-side, observing with a smile that, as we were ill mounted, he would be too generous to attempt leaving us behind. As the floods were not yet subsided, we were obliged to hire a guide, who trotted on before, Mr. Burchell and I bringing up the rear. We lightened the fatigues of the road with philosophical disputes, which he seemed to understand perfectly. But what surprised me most was, that though he was a money borrower, he defended his opinions with as much obstinacy as if he had been my patron. He now and then also informed me to whom the different seats belonged that lay in our view as we travelled the road.

"That," cried he, pointing to a very magnificent house which stood at some distance, "belongs to Mr. Thornhill, a young gentleman who enjoys a large fortune, though entirely dependent on the will of his uncle, Sir William Thornhill, a gentleman who, content with a little himself, permits his nephew to enjoy the rest, and chiefly resides in town."

"What!" cried I, "is my young landlord then the nephew of a man, whose virtues, generosity, and singularities are so universally known? I have heard Sir William Thornhill represented as one of the most generous yet whimsical men in the kingdom; a man of consummate benevolence."

My attention was so much taken up by Mr. Burchell's account, that I scarce looked forward as we went along, till we were alarmed by the cries of my family; when, turning, I perceived my youngest daughter in the midst of a rapid stream, thrown from her horse, and struggling with the torrent. She had sunk twice, nor was it my power to disengage myself in time to bring her relief. She must have certainly perished had not my companion, perceiving her danger,

instantly plunged in to her relief and, with some difficulty, brought her in safety to the opposite shore.

After we were refreshed at the next inn, and had dined together, as Mr. Burchell was going to a different part of the country, he took leave, and we pursued our journey: my wife observing, as he went, that she liked him extremely, and protesting, that if he had birth and fortune to entitle him to match into such a family as ours, she knew no man she would sooner fix upon.

The place of our retreat was in a little neighbourhood consisting of farmers who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. Remote from the polite, they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners. Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful underwood behind, and a prattling river before. My farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, having given a hundred pounds for my predecessor's goodwill. My house consisted of but one storey, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside, were nicely whitewashed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlour and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. There were three other apartments, one for my wife and me, another for our two daughters, within our own, and the third, with two beds, for the rest of the children.

When Sunday came, it was indeed a day of finery, which all my sumptuary edicts could not restrain. How well soever I fancied my lectures against pride had conquered the vanity of my daughters; yet I still found them secretly attached to all their former finery: they still loved laces, ribands, bugles, and catgut; my wife herself retained a passion for her crimson paduasoy, because I formerly happened to say it became her.

The first Sunday, in particular, their behaviour served to mortify me. I had desired my girls the preceding night to be dressed early the next day; for I always loved to be at church a good while before the rest of the congregation. They punctually obeyed my directions; but when we were to assemble in the morning at breakfast, down came my wife and daughters, dressed out in all their former splendour. I could

not help smiling at their vanity, particularly that of my wife, from whom I expected more discretion. In this exigence, therefore, my only resource was to order my son, with an important air, to call our coach—"for if we walk to church in this trim, the very children in the parish will hoot after us."

"Indeed," replied my wife, "I always imagined that my Charles was fond of seeing his children neat and handsome about him."

"You may be as neat as you please," interrupted I, "and I shall love you the better for it; but all this is not neatness, but frippery. No, my children, those gowns may be altered into something of a plainer cut; for finery is very unbecoming in us, who want the means of decency."

This remonstrance had the proper effect; they went with great composure, that very instant, to change their dress; and the next day I had the satisfaction of finding my daughters, at their own request, employed in cutting up their trains into Sunday waistcoats for Dick and Bill, the two little ones; and, what was still more satisfactory, the gowns seemed improved by this curtailing.

At a small distance from the house, my predecessor had made a seat, overshadowed by a hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine, and our labour soon finished, we usually sat together, to enjoy an extensive landscape in the calm of the evening. Here, too, we drank tea, which was now become an occasional banquet. On these occasions, our two little ones always read for us, and they were regularly served after we had done.

In this manner we began to find that every situation in life may bring its own peculiar pleasures: every morning waked us to a repetition of toil; but the evening repaid it with vacant hilarity.

It was about the beginning of autumn, on a holiday—for I kept such as intervals of relaxation from labour—that I had drawn out my family to our usual place of amusement, and our young musicians began their usual concert. As we were thus engaged, we saw a stag bound nimbly by, within about twenty paces of where we were sitting, and by its panting it seemed pressed by the hunters. We had not much time to reflect upon the poor animal's distress, when we perceived

the dogs and horsemen come sweeping along at some distance behind, and making the very path it had taken. I was instantly for returning in with my family. At last, a young gentleman of a more genteel appearance than the rest came forward, and while regarding us, instead of pursuing the chase, stopped short, and giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless superior air. He let us know his name was Thornhill, and that he was owner of the estate that lay for some extent around us. As his address, though confident, was easy, we soon became more familiar; and, perceiving musical instruments lying near, he begged to be favoured with a song. As I did not approve of such disproportioned acquaintances, I winked upon my daughters in order to prevent their compliance; but my hint was counteracted by one from their mother; so that, with a cheerful air, they gave us a favourite song of Dryden's. At the approach of evening he took leave; but not till he had requested permission to renew his visit, which, as he was our landlord, we most readily agreed to.

As soon as he was gone, my wife called a council on the conduct of the day. She was of opinion, that it was a most fortunate hit; for that she had known even stranger things at last brought to bear. She hoped again to see the day in which we might hold up our heads with the best of them. There is no character more contemptible than a man that is a fortune-hunter; and I can see no reason why fortune-hunting women should not be contemptible too. Thus, at best, we shall be contemptible if his views be honourable; but if they be otherwise!—no apprehension from the conduct of my children; but I think there are some from his character. I would have proceeded, but for the interruption of a servant from the Squire who, with his compliments, sent us a side of venison, and a promise to dine with us some days after. This well-timed present pleaded more powerfully in his favour than anything I had to say could obviate.

As we carried on the former dispute with some degree of warmth, in order to accommodate matters it was universally agreed that we should have a part of the venison for supper; and the girls undertook the task with alacrity. As I spoke, poor Mr. Burchell entered the house, and was welcomed by the

family, who shook him heartily by the hand, while little Dick officiously reached him a chair. I was pleased with the poor man's friendship for two reasons: because I knew that he wanted mine, and I knew him to be friendly as far as he was able. All our beds were already taken up, and it was too late to send him to the next ale-house. In this dilemma, little Dick offered him his part of the bed, if his brother Moses would let him lie with him.

"And I," cried Bill, "will give Mr. Burchell my part, if my sisters will take me to theirs."

"Well done, my good children," cried I, "hospitality is one of the first Christian duties. Deborah, my dear, give those boys a lump of sugar each; and let Dick's be the largest, because he spoke first."

In the morning early I called out my whole family to help at saving an aftergrowth of hay, and our guest offering his assistance, he was accepted among the number. I could not avoid observing the assiduity of Mr. Burchell in assisting my daughter Sophia in her part of the task. When we were finished for the day, Mr. Burchell was invited as on the night before, but he refused, as he was to lie that night at a neighbour's, to whose child he was carrying a whistle. When gone, our conversation at supper turned upon our late unfortunate guest.

"What a strong instance," said I, "is that poor man of the miseries attending a youth of levity and extravagance."

I delivered this observation with too much acrimony, which my Sophia gently reproved.

"Whatsoever his former conduct may have been, papa, his circumstances should exempt him from censure now. His present indigence is a sufficient punishment for former folly."

As we expected our landlord the next day, my wife went to make the venison pasty. Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones.

When the morning arrived on which we were to entertain our young landlord, it may be easily supposed what provisions were exhausted to make an appearance. It may be also conjectured that my wife and daughters expanded their gayest plumage upon this occasion. Mr. Thornhill came with a couple of friends, his chaplain and feeder. The servants, who

were numerous, he politely ordered to the next ale-house, but my wife, in the triumph of her heart, insisted on entertaining them all; for which, by the by, our family was pinched for three weeks after. As Mr. Burchell had hinted to us the day before, that he was making some proposal of marriage to Miss Wilmot, my son George's former mistress, this a good deal damped the heartiness of his reception: but accident in some measure relieved our embarrassment; for one of the company happening to mention her name, Mr. Thornhill observed with an oath, that he never knew anything more absurd than calling such a fright a beauty.

"For, strike me ugly," continued he, "if I should not find as much pleasure in choosing my mistress by the information of a lamp under the clock of St. Dunstan's."

Olivia thought him a very fine gentleman. Mr. Thornhill, notwithstanding his real ignorance, talked with ease, and could expatiate upon the common topics of conversation with fluency. It is not surprising then, that such talents should win the affections of a girl who by education was taught to value an appearance in herself, and consequently to set a value upon it in another.

The next morning we were again visited by Mr. Burchell, though I began, for certain reasons, to be displeased with the frequency of his return; but I could not refuse him my company and my fireside. It is true, his labour more than required his entertainment.

Our family dined in the field, and we sat, or rather reclined, round a temperate repast, our cloth spread upon the hay, while Mr. Burchell gave cheerfulness to the feast.

But our tranquillity was soon disturbed by the report of a gun just by us and, immediately after, a man was seen bursting through the hedge, to take up the game he had killed. This sportsman was the Squire's chaplain, who had shot one of the blackbirds that so agreeably entertained us. So loud a report, and so near, startled my daughters; and I could perceive that Sophia in the fright had thrown herself into Mr. Burchell's arms for protection. The gentleman came up, and asked pardon for having disturbed us, affirming that he was ignorant of our being so near. He therefore sat down by my youngest daughter and, sportsman-like, offered her what

he had killed that morning. She was going to refuse, but a private look from her mother soon induced her to correct the mistake, and accept his present, though with some reluctance. The chaplain's errand was to inform us, that Mr. Thornhill had provided music and refreshments; and intended that night giving the young ladies a ball by moonlight, on the grass plot before our door.

Mr. Burchell, on hearing this, said somewhat suddenly, that he must go.

Mr. Burchell had scarce taken leave, and Sophia consented to dance with the chaplain, when my little ones came running out to tell us, that the squire was come with a crowd of company. Upon our return, we found our landlord, with a couple of under gentlemen and two young ladies richly dressed, whom he introduced as women of very great distinction and fashion from town. We happened not to have chairs enough for the whole company; but Mr. Thornhill immediately proposed that every gentleman should sit in a lady's lap. This I positively objected to, notwithstanding a look of disapprobation from my wife. Moses was therefore despatched to borrow a couple of chairs; and as we were in want of ladies to make up a set of country dances, the two gentlemen went with him in quest of a couple of partners. Chairs and partners were soon provided. The gentlemen returned with my neighbour Flamborough's rosy daughters, flaunting with red top-knots; but an unlucky circumstance was not adverted to,—though the Miss Flamboroughs were reckoned the very best dancers in the parish, and understood the jig and the roundabout to perfection, yet they were totally unacquainted with country dances. This at first discomposed us: however, after a little shoving and dragging, they at last went merrily on. Our music consisted of two fiddles with a pipe and tabor. The moon shone bright; Mr. Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball, to the great delight of the spectators; for the neighbours, hearing what was going forward, came flocking about us. My girl moved with so much grace and vivacity, that my wife could not avoid discovering the pride of her heart by assuring me that, though the little chit did it so cleverly, all the steps were stolen from herself. The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success.

They swam, sprawled, languished, and frisked; but all would not do; the gazers indeed owned that it was fine; but neighbour Flamborough observed that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo. After the dance had continued about an hour, the two ladies, who were apprehensive of catching cold, moved to break up the ball. One of them, I thought, expressed her sentiments upon this occasion in a very coarse manner when she observed, that, 'by the living jingo, she was all of a muck of sweat.' Upon our return to the house, we found a very elegant cold supper, which Mr. Thornhill had ordered to be brought with him. The conversation at this time was more reserved than before. The two ladies threw my girls quite in the shade; for they would talk of nothing but high life, and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses. 'Tis true they once or twice mortified us sensibly by slipping out an oath; but that appeared to me as the surest symptom of their distinction (though I am since informed that swearing is perfectly unfashionable). Their finery, however, threw a veil over any grossness in their conversation. My daughters seemed to regard their superior accomplishments with envy; and whatever appeared amiss, was ascribed to tip-top quality breeding. But the condescension of the ladies was still superior to their other accomplishments.

The two ladies began a very discreet and serious dialogue upon virtue: in this, my wife, the chaplain, and I, soon joined; and the squire himself was at last brought to confess a sense of sorrow for his former excesses. We talked of the pleasures of temperance, and of the sunshine in the mind unpolluted in guilt. I was so well pleased, that my little ones were kept up beyond the usual time to be edified by so much good conversation. Mr. Thornhill even went beyond me, and demanded if I had any objection to giving prayers. I joyfully embraced the proposal; and in this manner the night was passed in a most comfortable way, till at length the company began to think of returning. The ladies seemed very unwilling to part with my daughters, for whom they had conceived a particular affection, and joined in a request to have the pleasure of their company home. The squire seconded the proposal, and my wife added her entreaties; the girls, too, looked upon

me as if they wished to go. In this perplexity, I made two or three excuses, which my daughters as readily removed; so that at last I was obliged to give a peremptory refusal, for which we had nothing but sullen looks and short answers the whole day ensuing.

I now began to find that all my long and painful lectures upon temperance, simplicity and contentment were entirely disregarded. The distinctions lately paid us by our betters awakened that pride which I had lain asleep, but not removed. Our windows, again, as formerly, were filled with washes for the neck and face. The sun was dreaded as an enemy to the skin without doors, and the fire as a spoiler of the complexion within. My wife observed that rising too early would hurt her daughter's eyes, that working after dinner would redden their noses; and she convinced me that the hands never looked so white as when they did nothing. Instead therefore of finishing George's shirts, we now had them new-modelling their old gauzes, or flourishing upon catgut. The poor Miss Flamboroughs, their former gay companions, were cast off as mean acquaintance, and the whole conversation ran upon high-life, and high-lived company, with pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses.

Towards the end of the week we received a card from the two ladies; in which, with their compliments, they hoped to see all our family at Church on Sunday following. All Saturday morning I could perceive, in consequence of this, my wife and daughters in close conference together, and now and then glancing at me with looks that betrayed a latent plot. To be sincere, I had strong suspicions that some absurd proposal was preparing for appearing with splendour the next day. In the evening they began their operations in a very regular manner, and my wife undertook to conduct the siege. After tea, when I seemed in spirits, she began thus—

“I fancy, Charles, my dear, we shall have a great deal of good company at our Church to-morrow.”

“Perhaps we may, my dear,” returned I, “though you need be under no uneasiness about that; you shall have a sermon whether there be or not.”

“That is what I expect,” returned she, “but I think, my

dear, we ought to appear there as decently as possible, for who knows what may happen ? ”

“ Your precautions,” replied I, “ are highly commendable. A decent behaviour and appearance in Church is what charms me. We should be devout and humble, cheerful and serene.”

“ Yes,” cried she, “ I know that; but I mean we should go there in as proper a manner as possible; not altogether like the scrubs about us.”

“ You are quite right, my dear,” returned I, “ and I was going to make the very same proposal. The proper manner of going is to go there as early as possible, to have time for meditation before the service begins.”

“ Pooh, Charles,” interrupted she, “ all that is very true; but not what I would be at: I mean, we should go there genteelly. You know the Church is two miles off, and I protest I don’t like to see my daughters trudging up to their pew all blowzed and red with walking, and looking for all the world as if they had been winners at a smock race. Now, my dear, my proposal is this: there are our two plough-horses, the colt that has been in our family these nine years, and his companion Blackberry, that has scarce done an earthly thing for this month past. They are both grown fat and lazy. Why should not they do something as well as we ? And let me tell you, when Moses has trimmed them a little, they will cut a very tolerable figure.”

To this proposal I objected that walking would be twenty times more genteel than such a paltry conveyance, as Blackberry was wall-eyed, and the colt wanted a tail; that they had never been broke to the rein, but had a hundred vicious tricks; and that we had but one saddle and pillion in the whole house. All these objections, however, were overruled; so that I was obliged to comply. The next morning I perceived them not a little busy in collecting such materials as might be necessary for the expedition; but, as I found it would be a business of time, I walked on to the church before, and they promised speedily to follow. I waited near an hour in the reading desk for their arrival; but not finding them come as expected, I was obliged to begin, and went through the service, not without some uneasiness at finding them absent. This was

increased when all was finished, and no appearance of the family. I therefore walked back by the horseway, which was five miles round, though the footway was but two, and, when I got about half-way home, perceived the procession marching slowly forward towards the church; my son, my wife, and the two little ones exalted upon one horse, and my two daughters on the other. I demanded the cause of their delay; but I soon found by their looks they had met with a thousand misfortunes on the road. The horses had at first refused to move from the door, till Mr. Burchell was kind enough to beat them forward for about two hundred yards with his cudgel. Next, the straps of my wife's pillion broke down, and they were obliged to stop to repair them before they could proceed. After that, one of the horses took it into his head to stand still, and neither blows nor entreaties could prevail with him to proceed. It was just recovering from this dismal situation that I found them; but perceiving everything safe, I own their present mortification did not much displease me, as it would give me many opportunities of future triumph, and teach my daughters more humility.

Michaelmas-Eve happening on the next day, we were invited to burn nuts and play tricks at neighbour Flam-borough's. Our late mortifications had humbled us a little, or it is probable we might have rejected such an invitation with contempt: however, we suffered ourselves to be happy. Mr. Burchell, who was of the party, was always fond of seeing some innocent amusement going forward, and set the boys and girls to blindman's buff. In the midst of our game who should enter the room but our great acquaintances from town, Mr. Thornhill's friends, Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilemina Anelia Skeggs. Death! to be seen by ladies of such high breeding in such vulgar attitudes!

They protested their desire for a more lasting acquaintance with my family. They supported the conversation between themselves while my daughters sat silent. Towards the end of it was a passage which aroused the curiosity of my wife.

"Why, my dear," says the lady, "you know my companion and reader has left me. I have been for some time looking out for another. A proper person is no easy matter to find, and to be sure, thirty pounds a year is a small stipend."

"That I know," cried Miss Skeggs, "by experience, for three companions I had this last half year. Twenty-five guineas stipend, is not enough, it seems."

Thirty pounds a year and twenty-five guineas a year made fifty-six pounds, five shillings English money, all which was in a manner going abegging, and might easily be secured to the family. My wife studied my looks of approbation for a moment, and then*put forward my two daughters for the posts. Our two friends found the proposal agreeable, providing the references of my girls were satisfactory. Upon this we rested our petition, knowing that Mr. Thornhill's recommendation was all that would be necessary.

When we returned home, the night was dedicated to schemes of conquest. All this conversation was preparatory to my wife's putting forth a scheme. This was nothing less than that, as we were to hold our heads higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was grown old, at a neighbouring fair and buy a horse that would carry single or double on an occasion.

As the fair was the following day, I had intentions of going myself but my wife persuaded me that I had a cold.

"No, my dear," said she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy. You know all our great bargains are of his purchasing."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to entrust him with the commission. We waited all day for the return of Moses, and presently heard him approaching. He came slowly on foot, and sweating under a great dead box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedlar.

"Welcome, welcome, Moses; well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?"

"I have brought myself," cried Moses, with sly look at the box. "I sold the horse for three pounds five and twopence. I laid it all out in this bargain; a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases."

"A gross of green spectacles," repeated my wife, in a faint voice. "You parted with the colt and brought us back nothing but a gross of green, paltry, spectacles!"

"Dear mother," cried the boy, "the silver rims alone will sell for double the money."

"You need have no uneasiness about selling the rims," cried I. "They are not worth sixpence, for I perceive they are only copper varnished over."

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived.

Our family had now made several attempts to be fine; but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. I was going to moralise upon this, when our attention was called off to a warm dispute between my wife and Mr. Burchell, upon my daughter's intended expedition to town. My wife very strenuously insisted upon the advantages that would result from it. Mr. Burchell, on the contrary, dissuaded her with great ardour; and I stood neuter.

"I'll take my leave now," said he, "and perhaps come once more to take a final farewell when I am quitting the country."

Thus saying, he took up his hat, nor could the attempts of Sophia, whose looks seemed to upbraid his precipitancy, prevent his going. What Sophia's reflections were upon this occasion I cannot pretend to determine; but I was not displeased at the bottom that we were rid of a guest from whom I had much to fear.

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The journey of my daughters to town was now resolved upon, Mr. Thornhill having kindly promised to inspect their conduct himself, and inform us by letter of their behaviour.

But, alas! upon entering the house the next day, my wife and girls were all in tears, Mr. Thornhill having been there that day to inform them that their journey to town was entirely over. The two ladies, having heard reports of us from some malicious person, were that day set out for London. He could neither discover the tendency nor the author of these.

That evening, and a part of the following day, was employed in fruitless attempts to discover our enemies. As we were in this perplexity, one of our little boys, who had been playing abroad, brought in a letter-case, which he found on the green. It was quickly known to belong to Mr. Burchell, with whom it had been seen and, upon examination, contained some hints upon different subjects; but what particularly engaged our attention was a sealed note, superscribed, 'the copy of a letter

to be sent to the ladies at Thornhill Castle.' We deliberated whether the note should not be broken open. I was against it; but Sophia, who said she was sure that of all men he would be the last to be guilty of so much baseness, insisted upon its being read. In this she was seconded by the rest of the family, and at their joint solicitation I read as follows :

"Ladies,—The bearer will sufficiently satisfy you as to the person from whom this comes: one at least the friend of innocence, and ready to prevent its being seduced. I am informed for a truth, that you have some intention of bringing two ladies to town, whom I have some knowledge of, under the character of companions. As I would neither have simplicity imposed upon, nor virtue contaminated, I must offer it as my opinion, that the impropriety of such a step will be attended with dangerous consequences. It has never been my way to treat the infamous or the lewd with severity; nor should I now have taken this method of explaining myself, or reproving folly, did it not aim at guilt. Take, therefore, the admonition of a friend, and seriously reflect on the consequences of introducing infamy and vice into retreats where peace and innocence have hitherto resided."

Our doubts were now at an end. We all sat ruminating vengeance, when our other little boy came running in to tell us that Mr. Burchell was approaching at the other end of the field. We saw him approach: he entered, drew a chair, and sat down.

"A fine day, Mr. Burchell."

"A very fine day, Doctor."

"Do you know this, sir, this pocket-book?" said I.

"Yes, sir," returned he, with a face of impenetrable assurance, "that pocket-book is mine, and I am glad you have found it."

"And do you know," cried I, "this letter?"

"That letter?" replied he; "yes, it was I that wrote that letter."

"And how could you," said I, "so basely, so ungratefully presume to write this letter?"

"And how came you," replied he, with looks of unparalleled effrontery, "so basely to presume to break open this letter? Don't you know, now, I could hang you all for this?"

I could scarce govern my passion. "Ungrateful wretch! begone, and no longer pollute my dwelling with thy baseness! begone, and never let me see thee again!"

So saying, I threw him his pocket-book, which he took up, with a smile, and shutting the clasps with the utmost composure, left us, quite astonished at the serenity of his assurance.

Whatever might have been Sophia's sensations, the rest of the family was easily consoled for Mr. Burchell's absence by the company of our landlord, whose visits now became more frequent, and longer. It must be owned, that my wife laid a thousand schemes to entrap him; or, to speak more tenderly, used every art to magnify the merit of her daughter, Olivia. As our principal object was to discover the honour of Mr. Thornhill's addresses, my wife undertook to sound him by pretending to ask his advice in the choice of a husband for her eldest daughter.

The next time, therefore, that Mr. Thornhill came to see us, my girls took care to be out of the way, in order to give their mamma an opportunity of putting her scheme in execution. My wife artfully introduced it, by observing, that one of the Miss Flamborough's was likely to have a very good match of it in Mr. Spanker. To this the squire assenting, she proceeded to remark that they who had warm fortunes were always sure of getting good husbands.

"Ah, sir," returned my wife, "you are pleased to be facetious. But, now that you have put it into my head, seriously, Mr. Thornhill, can't you recommend me a proper husband for Olivia?"

"Madam," replied he, "if I were to choose, I would find out a person possessed of every accomplishment that can make an angel happy."

"Ah, Mr. Thornhill, you only flatter my poor girl: but we have been thinking of marrying her to one of your tenants; you know whom I mean—Farmer Williams. I should be glad to have your approbation of our choice."

"How, Madam!" replied he, "my approbation!—my approbation of such a choice! Never! And I have my reasons."

"Indeed, sir," cried Deborah, "if you have your reasons that's another affair; but I should be glad to know those reasons."

"Excuse me, Madam," returned he, "they lie too deep for discovery."

After he was gone, upon a general consultation, we could not tell what to make of these fine sentiments.

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As I only studied my child's real happiness, the assiduity of Mr. Williams pleased me, as he was in easy circumstances, prudent, and sincere. It required but very little encouragement to revive his former passion; so that in an evening or two he and Mr. Thornhill met at our house, and surveyed each other for some time with looks of anger; but Williams owed his landlord no rent, and little regarded his indignation.

"You now see, my child," said I, "that your confidence in Mr. Thornhill's passion was all a dream; he permits the rivalry of another, every way his inferior, though he knows it lies in his power to secure you to himself by a candid declaration. Whatever time you require to bring your fancied admirer to an explanation shall be granted; but at the expiration of that term, if he is still regardless, I must absolutely insist that honest Mr. Williams shall be rewarded for his fidelity. Name, then, your day."

She again renewed her most positive promise of marrying Mr. Williams, and at the next opportunity, in Mr. Thornhill's presence, that day month was fixed upon for her nuptials with his rival. It was within about four days of her intended nuptials, that my little family at night were gathered round a charming fire, telling stories of the past, and laying schemes for the future. Suddenly Dick came running in.

"O papa, papa, she is gone from us, she is gone from us; my sister Livy is gone from us for ever!"

"Gone, child?"

"Yes; she is gone off with two gentlemen in a post-chaise, and one of them kissed her, and said he would die for her; and she cried very much, and was for coming back; but he persuaded her again, and she went into the chaise."

I determined to find out our betrayer, wherever he was, and reproach his baseness. The next morning we missed our wretched child at breakfast. My wife attempted to ease her heart by reproaches.

"Never," cried she, "shall that vilest stain of our family again darken these harmless doors. I will never call her daughter again."

"Wife," said I, "do not talk thus hardly. My son, bring hither my Bible and my staff: I will pursue her, wherever she is; and though I cannot save her from shame, I may prevent the continuance of her iniquity."

I directed my steps towards Thornhill Castle, resolving to upbraid the squire, and, if possible to bring back my daughter; but before I had reached his seat, I was met by one of my parishioners, who said he saw a young lady resembling my daughter in a post-chaise with a gentleman, who by the description I could only guess to be Mr. Burchell, and that they drove very fast. This information, however, did by no means satisfy me; I therefore went to the young squire's and, though it was yet early, insisted upon seeing him immediately. He soon appeared with the most open familiar air, and seemed perfectly amazed at my daughter's elopement. I now therefore condemned my former suspicions, and could turn them only on Mr. Burchell. The appearance of another witness left me no room to doubt of his villainy, who averred that he and my daughter were actually gone towards the Wells, about thirty miles off. I never debated with myself whether these accounts might not have been given by persons purposely placed in my way to mislead me, but resolved to pursue my daughter and her fancied deluder thither.

Early the next day, I walked forward to the races, and about four in the afternoon I came upon the course. I thought I perceived Mr. Burchell at some distance from me; but, as if he dreaded an interview, upon my approaching him he mixed among a crowd, and I saw him no more. I now reflected that it would be to no purpose to continue my pursuit farther. But the agitations of my mind, and the fatigues I had undergone, threw me into a fever. I retired to a little ale-house by the roadside and I laid me down patiently

to wait the issue of my disorder. I languished here for near three weeks; but at last my constitution prevailed.

I now proceeded forward, and had walked about two hours, when I perceived what appeared at a distance like a waggon, which I was resolved to overtake; but when I came up with it, found it to be a strolling company's cart, that was carrying their scenes and other theatrical furniture to the next village, where they were to exhibit. I travelled with the company to the village. I did not consider the impropriety of my being in such company, till I saw a mob gather about me. I therefore took shelter, as fast as possible, in the first ale-house that offered; and being shown into the common-room, was accosted by a very well-dressed gentleman, who demanded whether I was the real chaplain of the company, or whether it was only to be my masquerade character in the play? Upon my informing him of the truth, and that I did not belong, in any sort, to the company, he insisted that the player and I should sup with him at his house; with which request, after some entreaties, we were prevailed on to comply.

The house where we were to be entertained lying at a small distance from the village, our inviter observed, that as the coach was not ready, he would conduct us on foot; and we soon arrived at one of the most magnificent mansions I had seen in that part of the country. The apartment into which we were shown was perfectly elegant and modern: he went to give orders for supper. Our entertainer soon returned; an elegant supper was brought in; two or three ladies in easy dishabille were introduced, and the conversation began with some sprightliness. Just then we heard a footman's rap at the door, and the two ladies cried out, "As sure as death, there is our master and mistress come home!" It seems my entertainer was all this while only the butler. Nothing could now exceed my confusion upon seeing the gentleman and his lady enter; nor was their surprise, at finding such company and good cheer, less than ours.

"Gentlemen," cried the real master of the house to me and my companion, "my wife and I are your most humble servants; but I protest this is so unexpected a favour, that we almost sink under the obligation."

I was struck dumb with the apprehensions of my own

absurdity, when whom should I next see enter the room but my dear Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was formerly designed to be married to my son George, but whose match was broken off, as already related. As soon as she saw me, she flew to my arms with the utmost joy.

"My dear sir," cried she, "to what happy accident is it that we owe so unexpected a visit? I am sure my uncle and aunt will be in raptures when they find they have got the good Dr. Primrose for their guest."

Upon hearing my name, the old gentleman and lady very politely stepped up, and welcomed me with most cordial hospitality. Nor could they forbear smiling, upon being informed of the nature of my present visit. Mr. Arnold and his lady, to whom the house belonged, now insisted upon having the pleasure of my stay for some days. That night I was shown to a magnificent chamber.

At dinner we found the manager of the strolling company that I mentioned before, who was come to dispose of tickets for the "Fair Penitent," which was to be acted that evening; the part of Horatio by a young gentleman who had never appeared on any stage. He seemed to be very warm in the praise of the new performer. This account in some measure excited our curiosity and, at the entreaty of the ladies, I was prevailed upon to accompany them to the playhouse, which was no other than a barn. The new performer advanced at last; and let parents think of my sensations by their own, when I found it was my unfortunate son! He was going to begin, when, turning his eyes upon the audience, he perceived Miss Wilmot and me, and stood at once speechless and immovable. I was soon awaked from this disagreeable reverie by Miss Wilmot who, pale and with a trembling voice, desired me to conduct her back to her uncle's. When we got home, Mr. Arnold, who was as yet a stranger to our extraordinary behaviour, being informed that the new performer was my son, sent his coach and an invitation for him; and as he persisted in his refusal to appear again upon the stage, the players put another in his place, and we soon had him with us.

After we had supped, Mrs. Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but upon her pressing the request, he was

obliged to inform her, that a stick and wallet were all the movable things upon this earth which he could boast of.

"Why, ay, my son," cried I, "you left me but poor; and poor I find you are come back: and yet I make no doubt you have seen a great deal of the world."

"Yes, sir," replied my son, "but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her; and, indeed, of late I have desisted from the pursuit."

"I fancy, sir," cried Mrs. Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be amusing; the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but could the company prevail for the rest, it would be an additional obligation."

"Madam," replied my son, "I promise you the pleasure you have in hearing will not be half so great as my vanity in repeating them."

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My son's account was too long to be delivered at once; the first part of it was begun that night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner the next day, when the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me, with a whisper, that the squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr. Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour.

After tea he called me aside to inquire after my daughter; but upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised; adding that he had been since frequently at my house in order to comfort the rest of my family. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot or my son; and upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me by all means to keep it a secret:

"For at best," cried he, "it is but divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss Livy may not be so guilty as we all imagine."

Each day the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr. Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him. He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone. This was nothing less than his having procured my son an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds.

"As for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure," said he.

This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day, to secure his commission. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress—for Miss Wilmot actually loved him—he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits.

The next morning I took leave of the good family. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road-side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. As we sat I heard his wife upstairs, and I soon perceived, by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger.

"Oh, dear Madam," cried the stranger, "pity me—pity a poor abandoned creature, for one night."

I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by her hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.

Olivia now told me how the squire had deceived her.

"I knew that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed by a popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust to, but his honour."

"What!" interrupted I, "and were you indeed married by a priest in orders?"

"Indeed, sir, we were," replied she, "though we were both sworn to conceal his name."

"Why, then, my child, you are now his wife to all intents and purpose."

"Alas, papa!" replied she, "you are but little acquainted with his villainies; he has been married already by the same priest to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned."

"Has he so?" cried I, "then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him to-morrow. But I interrupt you, my dear; go on."

"The very next morning," continued she, "I found what little expectation I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections. Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance. I desired to part. As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this has gone to her heart; but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it."

On our return home, I was horrified to see my house in flames. I joined with the others in my family in trying to save what little we could, and in so doing, burned my arm from the wrist to the shoulder. No one knew how this fire had so suddenly started. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters' fortunes were entirely consumed, except a box with some papers that stood in the kitchen. The neighbours contributed what they could, they brought us clothes, and furnished one of our out-houses. My wife was at first reluctant to forgive Olivia, for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men, but in the end she did. Our good neighbours came every day. Honest Farmer Williams was not last among these visitors, but heartily offered his friendship.

Shortly Olivia received a further blow. She heard that Mr. Thornhill was about to marry Miss Wilmot. I wrote a letter to Miss Wilmot, telling her all, which I sent to my son to deliver. He returned in three days. He had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days.

The next morning the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage alarmed us. In a few minutes he alighted and inquired after my health.

"Sir," I replied, "your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character."

"I vow, sir," returned he, "I am amazed. I hope you do not think your daughter's late excursion with me had anything criminal in it?"

"Mr. Thornhill," replied I, "hear me once for all: as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to."

"I find," cried he, "you are bent on obliging me to talk harsher than I intended. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens. Nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice."

"Go," I answered, "though you have my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt."

"If so," returned he, "depend upon it you shall feel the effects of this insolence." Upon which he departed abruptly.

The next morning two justices appeared, and informing me of their business, made me their prisoner, bidding me to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

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Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather the village. Upon entering it we put up at an inn. After seeing my family properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison. As I was sitting there one of my fellow prisoners entered into conversation with me. I recognised him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," cried I, "is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson? I suppose you must recollect one Dr. Primrose, from whom you bought a horse?"

"Yes, sir," returned he, "I remember you perfectly well; I bought a horse, but forgot to pay for him."

The fellow gave me some of his bedding and I settled for the night.

The next day Moses found lodgings for my family near the gaol. While talking to Mr. Jenkinson, he suggested that I should write to Sir William Thornhill and tell him of his nephew's ill usage.

Three days after the letter was dispatched, I was in a state of anxiety. The fourth arrived, yet received no answer to my letter. The fifth day after I had written the letter I heard that my child Olivia was dead. Ill-fortune followed fast. That same afternoon saw my son George brought in, fettered. He had challenged the Squire to a duel, but Mr. Thornhill had not appeared himself, sending four of his servants instead. One of them my son had wounded. The other three overpowered him and brought him hither. Fast on this case the news that Sophia was carried off by villains. Having all that was left of my family about me at that time, I resolved to ease my grief by preaching to the prisoners. *

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When I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, observing that he must remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to visit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person about two hours before in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to

town. He had scarce delivered this news, when the gaoler came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophia was below and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered and, with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me, in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure.

"Here, papa," cried the charming girl, "here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety."

A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

"Ah, Mr. Burchell!" cried I, "this is but a wretched habitation you now find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who, under the mask of friendship, has undone me."

"It is impossible," cried Mr. Burchell, "that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it."

"It was ever my conjecture," cried I, "that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how hast thou been relieved, or who the ruffians were that carried thee away?"

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "as to the villain who carried me off, I am yet ignorant. For, as my mama and I were walking out, he came behind us and, almost before I could call for help, forced me into the post-chaise, and, in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road, to whom I cried out for assistance, but they disregarded my entreaties. In the meantime, the ruffian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out: he flattered and threatened by turns, and swore that, if I continued but silent, he intended no harm.

In the meantime, I had broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but your old friend, Mr. Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name, and entreated his help. I repeated my exclamations several times, upon which, with a very loud voice, he bade the postillion to stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still great speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, when, in less than a minute, I saw Mr. Burchell come running up by the side of the horses and, with one blow knock the postilion to the ground. The horses, when he was fallen, soon stopped of themselves, and the ruffian, stepping out, with oaths and menaces, drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril, to retire; but Mr. Burchell, running up, shivered his sword to pieces and then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I was at this time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in triumph. The postilion, who was recovered, was going to make his escape too; but Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to mount again and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed, to me at least, to be dangerous. He continued to complain of the pain as we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr. Burchell's compassion, who, at my request, exchanged him for another, at an inn where we called on our return."

"Welcome, then," cried I, "my child! and thou, her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes! Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense, she is yours; if you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her; obtain her consent,—as I know you have her heart,—and you have mine. And let me tell you, sir, that I give you no small treasure: she has been celebrated for beauty, it is true, but that is not my meaning,—I give you a treasure in her mind."

"But I suppose, sir," cried Mr. Burchell, "that you are appraised of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves?"

"If your present objection," replied I, "be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist: but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and if I could give her thousands, and thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice."

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal: and, without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if he could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn; to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once, and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful; the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted, and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him, while Mr. Burchell, in the meantime, asked me if my son's name was George; to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence.

"Come on," cried I, "my son; though we are fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer; to that brave man it is that I am indebted for

yet having a daughter: give him, my boy, the hand of friendship; he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance.

"My dear brother," cried his sister, "why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other."

He still continued his silence and astonishment, till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen anything so truly majestic as the air he assumed on this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air—

"I again find," said he, "unthinking boy, that the same crime—" But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.

"Bid the fellow wait," cried our guest, "till I shall have leisure to receive him," and then turning to my son, "I again find, sir," proceeded he, "that you are guilty of the same offence for which you once had my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that a contempt for your own life gives you a right to take that of another: but where, sir, is the difference between a duellist, who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the gamester's fraud, when he alleges that he staked a counter?"

"Alas, sir," cried I, "whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bitterness of her resentment, required him, upon her blessing, to avenge her quarrel. Here, sir, is the letter, which will serve to convince you of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt."

He took the letter, and hastily read it over. "This," says he, "though not a perfect excuse, is such a palliation of his fault as induces me to forgive him. And now, sir," continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, "I see you are surprised at finding me here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am now come to see justice done a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of thy father's behaviour. I have, at his little dwelling, enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery; and have received that happiness that courts could not give, from the amusing simplicity around his fireside. My nephew has been appraised of my intentions of coming here, and I find he is arrived. It would be wronging him and you to condemn him without examination: if there be injury, there shall be redress; and this I may say, without boasting, that none have ever taxed the injustice of Sir William Thornhill."

We now found that the personage whom we had so long entertained as a harmless amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarce any were strangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom Senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah! sir," cried my wife, with a piteous aspect, "how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness? The slights you received from me the last time I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I audaciously threw out—these, sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he with a smile, "if you had your joke, I had my answer: I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frightened my little girl here. I had not even time to examine the rascal's person so as to

describe him in an advertisement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you should know him again ? ”

“ Indeed, sir,” replied she, “ I cannot be positive; yet now I recollect, he had a large mark over one of his eyebrows.”

“ I ask pardon, Madam,” interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, “ but be so good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair ? ”

“ Yes,” I think so,” cried Sophia.

“ And did your honour,” continued he, turning to Sir William, “ observe the length of his legs ? ”

“ I can’t be sure of their length,” cried the Baronet, “ but I am convinced of their swiftness; for he outran me, which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done.”

“ Please your honour,” cried Jenkinson, “ I know the man; it is certainly the same; the best runner in England; he has beaten Pinwire of Newcastle: Timothy Baxter is his name; I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat this moment. If your honour will bid Mr. Gaoler let two of his men go with me, I’ll engage to produce him to you in an hour at farthest.”

Upon this the gaoler was called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. .

“ Yes, please your honour,” replied the gaoler. “ I know Sir William Thornhill well, and everybody that knows anything of him will desire to know more of him.”

“ Well, then,” said the Baronet, “ my request is, that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority; and as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you.”

“ Your promise is sufficient,” replied the other, “ and you may, at a minute’s warning, send them over England whenever your honour thinks fit.”

In pursuance of the gaoler’s compliance, Jenkinson was despatched in search of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in and climbed up to Sir William’s neck, in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee.

"What, Bill, you chubby rogue," cried he, "do you remember your old friend Burchell? and Dick, too, my honest veteran, are you here? you shall find I have not forgot you."

So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement: this being sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which request the Baronet complied, and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.

Mr. Thornhill made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain.

"No fawning, sir, at present," cried the Baronet, with a look of severity; "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult? His son, too, whom you feared to face as a man——"

"Is it possible, sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle should object that as a crime, which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?"

"Your rebuke," cried Sir William, "is just; you have acted, in this instance, prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done: my brother, indeed, was the soul of honour; but thou—Yes, you have acted, in this instance, perfectly right, and it has my warmest approbation."

"And I hope," said the nephew, "that the rest of my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I appeared, sir,

with this gentleman's daughter at some places of public amusement: thus, what was levity, scandal called by a harsher name, and it was reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here, my attorney and steward can best inform you, as I commit the management of business entirely to them. If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling, or even unable to pay them, it is their business to proceed in this manner: and I see no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of redress."

"If this," cried Sir William, "be as you have stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offence; and though your conduct might have been more generous in not suffering this gentleman to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet it has been at least equitable."

"He cannot contradict a single particular, replied the squire; "I defy him to do so; and several of my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, sir," continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him—"thus, sir, my own innocence is vindicated: but though at your entreaty I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern. And this, too, at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life,—this, I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it: one of my servants has been wounded dangerously; and even though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it."

"Thou monster!" cried my wife, "hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William will protect us; for my son is as innocent as a child: I am sure he is, and never did harm to man."

"Madam," replied the good man, "your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew persists——"

But the appearance of Jenkinson and the gaoler's two servants now called off our attention, who entered, hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed, and answering the description given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter.

"Here," cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, "here we have him; and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, ~~this~~ ^{he} is one."

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink back with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn, but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him.

"What, squire," cried he, "are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter? But this is the way all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "has already confessed all. This is the gentleman reported to be dangerously wounded. He declares that it was Mr. Thornhill who first put him upon the affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with a post-chaise. The plan was laid between them that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in, in the meantime, as if by accident, to her rescue; and that they should fight a while, and then he was to run off,—by which Mr. Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself, under the character of her defender."

Sir William remembered the coat to have been worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

"Heavens!" cried Sir William, "what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice, too, as he seemed to be! But he shall have it; secure him, Mr. Gaoler—Yet, hold! I fear there is no legal evidence to detain him."

Upon this Mr. Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be

admitted as evidence against him, but that his servants should be examined.

"Your servants!" replied Sir William. "Wretch! call them yours no longer; but come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called."

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his power was now over.

"Tell me," cried Sir William, sternly, "have you ever seen your master, and that fellow dressed up in his clothes, in company together?"

"Yes, please your honour," cried the butler, "a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies."

"How!" interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, "this to my face?"

"Yes," replied the butler, "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved you or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind."

"Now, then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his honour whether you know anything of me."

"I can't say," replied the butler, "that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you were one of them."

"So then," cried Sir William, "I find you have brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches! But" continuing his examination, "you tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter."

"No, please your honour," replied the butler, "he did not bring her, for the squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them."

"It is but too true," cried Jenkinson; "I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned me, and I confess it to my confusion."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Baronet, "how every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his present prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge. At my request, Mr. Gaoler, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I'll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate, who has com-

mitted him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? Let her appear to confront this wretch: I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Entreat her to come in. Where is she?"

"Ah! sir," said I, "that question stings me to the heart: I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries—"

Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentlemen, her father, were passing through the town, on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there, from the window, that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learned from him some account of our misfortunes; but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of her going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her, which he did, and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

We all continued silent for some moments, "Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill," cried she to the squire, who she supposed was come here to succour, and to not oppress us, "I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret."

"He find pleasure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her. "No, my dear, his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him, Madam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced humanity. A wretch, who, after having deluded this poor man's daughter, after plotting against the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father into prison, and the eldest son into fetters because he had the courage to face her betrayer.

And give me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you upon an escape from the embraces of such a monster."

"O goodness!" cried the lovely girl, "how have I been deceived! Mr. Thornhill informed me for certain that this gentleman's eldest son, Captain Primrose, was gone off to America with his new-married lady."

"My sweetest miss," cried my wife, "he has told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George never left the kingdom, nor ever was married. Though you have forsaken him, he has always loved you too well to think of anybody else; and I have heard him say, he would die a bachelor for your sake."

"Good heavens!" cried Miss Wilmot, "how very near have I been to the brink of ruin! But how great is my pleasure to have escaped it! Ten thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me! By his falsehoods, I was taught to detest one qually brave and generous."

But by this time my son was freed from the encumbrances of justice, as the person supposed to be wounded was detected to be an imposter. Mr. Jenkinson, also, who had acted as his valet-de-chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now therefore entered handsomely dressed in his regimentals. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart, for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared amazed at her condescension, and could scarce believe it real.

"Sure, Madam," cried he, "this is but delusion! I can never have merited this! To be blessed thus is to be too happy!"

"No, sir," replied she, "I have been deceived, basely deceived, else nothing could have ever made me unjust to my promise. Be assured, that, if your Arabella cannot be yours, she shall never be another's."

"And no other's you shall be," cried Sir William, "if I have any influence with your father."

This hint was sufficient for my son, Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But in the meantime, the squire, perceiving that he was on every side undone, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open and hardy villain.

"I find, then," cried he, "that I am to expect no justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. You shall know, sir," turning to Sir William, "I am no longer a poor dependent upon your favours. I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot's fortune from me, which, I thank her father's assiduity, is pretty large. The articles, and a bond for her fortune, are signed, and safe in my possession. It was her fortune, not her person, that induced me to wish for this match; and, possessed of the one, let who will take the other."

This was an alarming blow. Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him?

"Though fortune," said she, "is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give."

"And that, Madam," cried the real lover, "was indeed all that you ever had to give; at least all that I ever thought worth the acceptance."

Mr. Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped, and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr. Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He sat, therefore, for some minutes employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety.

"I must confess, sir," cried he, "that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing

to take her without fortune: they have long loved each other; and, for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting in his promotion. Leave, then, that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit that happiness which courts your acceptance."

"Sir William," replied the old gentleman, "be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him, with all my heart. There is still, thank heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here" (meaning me) "give me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready, this night, to be the first to join them together."

As it now remained with me to make the young couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required, which, to one who had such little expectations as I, was no great favour.

"After all my misfortunes," cried my son George, "to be thus rewarded!"

"Yes, my George," returned his lovely bride, "now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I."

"And I promise you," cried the Squire, with a malicious grin, "that I shall be very happy with what you despise."

"Hold, hold, sir," cried Jenkinson, "there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it. Pray, your honour," continued he to Sir William, "can the Squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?"

"How can you make such a simple demand?" replied the Baronet. "Undoubtedly he cannot."

"I am sorry for that," cried Jenkinson; "for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, well as I love him, that this contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already."

"You lie, like a rascal!" returned the Squire, who seemed roused by this insult. "I never was legally married to any woman."

"Indeed, begging your honour's pardon," replied the other, "you were: and I hope you will show a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife; and if the company restrain their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see."

So saying, he went off, with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design.

"Ay, let him go," cried the Squire, "whatever else I may have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs."

"I am surprised," said the Baronet, "what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, I suppose!"

"Perhaps, sir," replied I, "he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman has laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some one more artful than the rest has been found able to deceive him. Amazement! Do I see my lost daughter? Do I hold her? It is, it is my life, my happiness! I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee—and still thou shalt live to bless me."

The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine, when I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures.

"And art thou returned to me, my darling," cried I, "to be my comfort in age?"

"That she is," cried Jenkinson, "and make much of her, for she is your own honourable child, and as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let the other be who she will. And as for you, Squire, as sure as you stand there, this young lady is your lawful wedded wife: and to convince you that I speak nothing but the truth, here is the licence by which you were married together."

So saying, he put the licence into the Baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every respect.

"And now, gentlemen," continued he, "I find you are surprised at all this; but a few words will explain the difficulty. That there Squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship (but that's between ourselves), has often employed me in doing odd little things for him. Among the rest, he com-

missioned me to procure him a false licence and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But as I was very much his friend, what did I do, but went and got a true licence and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. 'Perhaps you'll think it was generosity made me do all this: but no, to my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the licence, and let the Squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down whenever I wanted money."

A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment. Happiness was expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. But, perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusion.

"How could you," cried I, turning to Mr. Jenkinson, "how could you add to my miseries by the story of her death? But it matters not; my pleasure at finding her again is more than a recompense for the pain."

"As to your question," replied Jenkinson, "that is easily answered. I thought the only probable means of freeing you from prison was by submitting to the squire and consenting to his marriage with the other young lady. But these you had vowed never to grant while your daughter was living; there was therefore no other method to bring things to bear, but by persuading you that she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now."

In the whole assembly now there appeared only two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr. Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him; he now saw the gulf of infamy and want before him, and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and in a voice of piercing misery implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and, after pausing a few moments,

"Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude," cried he, "deserve no tenderness; yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken,—a bare competence shall be supplied to support the wants of life, but not its follies. This young lady, the wife, shall be put in

possession of a third part of that fortune which once was thine, and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the future."

The Baronet ordered him to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one, such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father. My wife, too, kissed her daughter with much affection; as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of Sophia, and Moses followed in turn; and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction seemed scarce capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy on the looks of all except that of my daughter, Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem satisfied.

"I think now," cried he, with a smile, "that all the company except one or two seem perfectly happy. There remains only an act of justice for me to do. You are sensible, sir," continued he, turning to me, "of the obligations we both owe to Mr. Jenkinson; and it is but just we should both reward him for it. Miss Sophia will, I am sure, make him very happy, and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune; and upon this I am sure they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? Will you have him?"

My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother's arms at the hideous proposal.

"Have him, sir!" cried she faintly, "no, sir, never!"

"What!" cried he again, "not have Mr. Jenkinson, your benefactor, a handsome young fellow, with five hundred pounds, and good expectations?"

"I beg, sir," returned she, scarce able to speak, "that you'll desist, and not make me so very wretched."

"Was ever such obstinancy known," cried he again, "to refuse a man whom the family have such infinite obligations to, who has preserved your sister, and who has five hundred pounds! What! not have him!"

"No, sir, never!" replied she angrily; "I'd sooner die first."

"If that be the case, then," cried he, "if you will not have him—I think I must have you myself."

And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ardour.

"My loveliest, my most sensible of girls," cried he, "how could you ever think your own Burchell could deceive you, or that Sir William Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress that loved him for himself alone?" Then turning to Jenkinson: "As I cannot, sir, part with this young lady myself, you may call upon my steward to-morrow for five hundred pounds."

Thus we had all our compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill underwent the same round of ceremony that her sister had done before. In the meantime, Sir William's gentleman appeared to tell us that the equipages were ready to carry us to the inn, where everything was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left those gloomy mansions of sorrow.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alternation of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw.

The next morning, as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting by my bedside, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before in his favour, he let me know that my merchant, who had failed in town, was arrested in Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked-for good fortune; but I had some doubts whether I ought, in justice, to accept this offer. While I was pondering upon this Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was that, as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me, that as he had the night before sent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were

speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company assembled.

In church a new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was, which couple should be married first. The argument was supported for some time between both, with equal obstinacy and good breeding. But, as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest; and, shutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have a mind to be married, and I think we had as good go back again; for I suppose there will be no business done here to-day."

This at once reduced them to reason. The Baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

We were no sooner returning to the inn, than numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr. Thornhull's cook. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fireside. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side the grave to wish for; all my cares were over; my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained, that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

* * * *

KIDNAPPED

Based on the story by

by

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94) entered Edinburgh University in 1867 and studied engineering, but soon abandoned this for law. An affection of the lungs led to his numerous journeys in search of health. Though frequently ill, he contributed to various periodicals. "Kidnapped" appeared in 1886. In 1888 Stevenson set out for the South Seas and settled in Samoa, where he temporarily recovered his health. He died suddenly in 1894 and is buried there.

I WILL begin the story of my adventures with a certain morning early in the month of June, the year of grace 1751, when I took the key for the last time out of the door of my father's house. Mr. Campbell, the minister of Essendean, was waiting for me by the garden gate.

"Well, Davie, lad," said he, "I will go with you as far as the ford, to set you on the way."

"Are ye sorry to leave Essendean?" said he, after a while.

"Why, sir," said I, "if I knew where I was going, or what was likely to become of me, I would tell you candidly. My father and mother, since they are both dead, I shall be no nearer to in Essendean than in the Kingdom of Hungary; and, to speak truth, if I thought I had a chance to better myself where I was going I would go with a good will."

"Ay?" said Mr. Campbell. "Very well, Davie. Then it behoves me to tell your fortune; or so far as I may. When your mother was gone, and your father began to sicken for his end, he gave me in charge a certain letter, which he said was your inheritance. 'So soon,' says he, 'as I am gone,

give my boy this letter, and start him off to the house of Shaws, not far from Cramond. That is the place I came from,' he said, 'and it's where it befits that my boy should return.' "

He gave me the letter, which was addressed in these words: "To the hands of Ebenezer Balfour, Esq., of Shaws, in his house of Shaws, these will be delivered by my son, David Balfour." My heart was beating hard at this great prospect now suddenly opening before a lad of seventeen years of age, the son of a poor country dominie in the Forest of Ettrick.

"I have here a little packet which contains four things," said Mr. Campbell. He tugged it, as he spoke, with some difficulty from the skirt pocket of his coat. "Of these four things, the first is your legal due: the money for your father's books and plenishing. The other three are gifts that Mrs. Campbell and myself would be blithe of your acceptance. The first, which is round, will likely please ye best at the first off-go. The second, which is flat and square and written upon, will stand by you through life, like a good staff for the road, and a good pillow to your head in sickness. And as for the last, which is cubical, that'll see you, it's my prayerful wish, into a better land."

With that he got upon his feet, and crying goodbye to me, set off backward by the way that we had come. And I sat down on a boulder and opened the parcel to see the nature of my gifts. That which he had called cubical, I had never had much doubt of; sure enough it was a Bible. That which he had called round, I found to be a shilling piece; and the third, which was to help me so wonderfully both in health and sickness all the days of my life, was a little piece of yellow paper, giving a recipe for a simple medicine. I laughed over this; but it was rather tremulous laughter; and I was glad to get my bundle on my staff's end and set out on my journey.

As I approached the district where I knew the house to be, I saw an honest fellow coming along a lane on the shaft of his cart, and I asked him if he had ever heard of a house they called the house of Shaws.

"What'll like be your business, mannie?" he asked.

"I was led to think that I would get a situation," I said, looking as modest as I could.

"What?" cries the carter, in so sharp a note that his

very horse started; and then, "Well, mannie," he added, "it's nae of my affairs; but ye'll keep clear of the Shaws."

The next person I came across was a dapper little man in a beautiful white wig, whom I saw to be a barber on his rounds; and knowing well that barbers were great gossips, I asked him plainly what sort of a man was Mr. Balfour of the Shaws.

"Hoot, hoot, hoot," said the barber, "nae kind of a man, nae kind of a man at all"; and began to ask me very shrewdly what my business was; but I was more than a match for him at that, and he went on to his next customer no wiser than he came.

It was drawing on to sundown when I met a stout, dark, sour-looking woman coming trudging down the hill; and she, when I had put my usual question, turned sharp about, accompanied me back to the summit she had just left, and pointed to a great bulk of building standing in the bottom of the valley. My heart sank. "That!" I cried.

The woman's face lit up with a malignant anger. "That is the house of Shaws! she cried. "Blood built it; blood stopped the building of it; blood shall bring it down. See here!" she cried again—"I spit upon the ground, and crack my thumb at it! Black be its fall!" And the woman, whose voice had risen to a kind of eldritch sing-song, turned with a skip, and was gone.

The nearer I got to the house, the drearier it appeared. It seemed like the one wing of the house that had never been finished. What should have been the inner end stood open on the upper floors, and showed against the sky with steps and stairs of uncompleted masonry. Many of the windows were unglazed, and bats flew in and out like doves out of a dove-cote. The night had begun to fall as I got close; and in three of the lower windows, which were very high up and narrow, and well barred, the changing light of a little fire began to glimmer.

The door, as well as I could see it in the dim light, was a great piece of wood studded with nails; and I lifted my hand with a faint heart under my jacket, and knocked once. Then I stood and waited: the house had fallen into a dead silence; a whole minute passed away, and nothing stirred but the bats

overhead. I knocked again, and hearkened again. I was in two minds whether to run away; but anger got the upper hand, and I began instead to rain kicks and buffets on the door. I heard a cough right overhead, and jumping back and looking up, beheld a man's head in a tall nightcap, and the bell mouth of a blunderbuss, at one of the first-storey windows.

"It's loaded," said a voice.

"I have come here with a letter," I said, "to Mr. Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws. Is he here?"

"From whom is it?" asked the man with the blunderbuss.

"That is neither here nor there," said I, for I was growing very wroth.

"Well," was the reply, "ye can put it down upon the doorstep, and be off with ye."

"I will do no such thing," I cried. "I will deliver it into Mr. Balfour's hands, as it was meant I should. It is a letter of introduction."

"Who are ye, yourself?" was the next question, after a considerable pause.

"I am not ashamed of my name," said I. "They call me David Balfour."

Presently there came a great rattling of chains and bolts, and the door was cautiously opened and shut again as soon as I had passed.

"Go into the kitchen and touch nothing," said the voice; and while the person of the house set himself to replacing the defences of the door, I groped my way forward and entered the kitchen.

The fire had burned up fairly bright, and showed me the barest room I think I had ever put my eyes on. Half a dozen dishes stood upon the shelves; the table was laid for supper with a bowl of porridge, a horn spoon, and a cup of small beer. Beside what I have named, there was not another thing in that great, stone-vaulted, empty chamber but lock-fast chests arranged along the wall, and a corner cupboard with a padlock.

As soon as the last chain was up, the man scanned me. He was a mean, stooping, narrow-shouldered, clay-faced creature; and his age might have been anything between fifty and seventy.

"Let's see the letter," said he.

I told him the letter was for Mr. Balfour; not for him.

"And who do ye think I am?" says he. "Give me Alexander's letter. He was my born brother; and little as ye seem to like either me or my house, or my good parritch, I'm your born uncle, Davie, my man, and you my born nephew. So give us the letter, and sit down and fill your kyte."

After I had eaten some of the porridge he bade me to follow him to my bed. He lit no lamp or candle, but set forth into the dark passage, groped his way, breathing deeply, up a flight of steps, and paused before a door, which he unlocked. I was close upon his heels, having stumbled after him as best I might; and then he bade me go in, for that was my chamber. I did as he bid, but paused after a few steps, and begged a light to go to bed with.

"Lights in a house is a thing I dinnae agree with," he said. "I'm unco' feared of fires. Goodnight to ye, Davie, my man." And before I had time to add a further protest, he pulled the door to, and I heard him lock me in from outside. The room was as cold as a well, and the bed, when I found my way to it, as damp as a peat-hag; but by good fortune I had caught up my bundle and my plaid, and rolling myself in the latter, I lay down upon the floor under the lee of the big bedstead, and fell speedily to sleep.

With the first peep of day I opened my eyes, to find myself in a great chamber. Ten years ago, or perhaps twenty, it must have been a pleasant room to lie down or awake in, as a man could wish; but damp, dirt, disuse, and the mice and spiders had done their worst since then.

Meanwhile the sun was shining outside; and being very cold in that miserable room, I knocked and shouted till my gaoler came and let me out. He carried me to the back of the house, where was a draw-well, and told me to wash my face there, if I wanted, and when that was done, I made the best of my way back to the kitchen, where he had lit the fire and was making the porridge.

When he had made an end of our meal, my uncle Ebenezer sat down in the sun at one of the windows and silently smoked. From time to time his eyes came coasting round to me, and he shot out one of his questions. Once it was, "And your mother?" and when I had told him that she, too, was dead,

"Ay, she was a bonnie lassie!" Then, after another long pause, "Whae were these friends o' yours?"

I told him they were different gentlemen of the name of Campbell; though, indeed, there was only one, and that the minister, that had ever taken the least note of me.

He seemed to turn this over in his mind; and then, "Davie, my man," said he, "ye've come to the right bit when ye came to your uncle Ebenezer. I've a great notion of the family, and I mean to do the right by you. I would nae like the Balfours to be humbled before a wheen Hieland Campbells, and I'll ask you to keep your tongue between your teeth. Nae letters; nae messages; nae kind of word to onybody; or else—there's my door."

For a day that was begun so ill, the time passed fairly well. We had the porridge cold again at noon, and hot porridge at night; porridge and small beer was my uncle's diet. In a room next door to the kitchen, where he suffered me to go, I found a great number of books, both Latin and English, in which I took great pleasure all the afternoon. One thing I discovered which put me in some doubt. This was an entry on the flyleaf of a book plainly written by my father's hand and thus conceived: "To my brother Ebenezer on his fifth birthday." Now, what puzzled me was this: That, as my father was, of course, the younger brother, he must either have made some strange error, or he might have written, before he was yet five, an excellent, clear, manly hand of writing. There came up into my mind (quite unbidden by me and even discouraged) a story like some ballad I had heard folks singing, of a poor lad that was a rightful heir and a wicked kinsman that tried to keep him from his own. For why should my uncle play a part with a relative that came, almost a beggar, to his door, unless in his heart he had some cause to fear him?

"Davie," he said later that day, "There's a wee bit siller that I half promised ye before ye were born," he continued: "promised it to your father. O, naithing legal, ye understand; just gentleman daffing at their winc. Well, I keepit that bit money separate—it was a great expense, but a promise is a promise—and it has grown by now to be a maitter of just precisely—just exactly"—and here he paused and stumbled—"of just exactly forty pounds! And if you'll step out-by to

the door a minute, just to see what kind of night it is, I'll get it out to ye and call ye in again."

When I was called in again, my uncle counted out into my hand seven-and-thirty golden guinea pieces; the rest was in his hand, in small gold and silver; but his heart failed him there, and he crammed the change into his pocket. "Now, I'd like well for you to help me." He pulled out of his pocket a rusty key. "There," he says, "there's the key of the stair-tower at the far end of the house. Ye can win into it from the outside, for that part of the house is no' finished. Gang ye in there, and up the stairs, and bring me down the chest that's at the top."

"Can I have a light, sir?" said I.

"Nae," said he, very cunningly. "Nae lights in my house. Keep to the wall," he added; "there's nae bannisters. But the stairs are grand under foot."

Out I went into the night till I came the length of the stairtower door at the far end of the unfinished wing. I had got the key into the keyhole and had just turned it, when all of a sudden, without a sound of wind or thunder, the whole sky lighted up with wild fire and went black again. I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back the colour of the darkness; and, indeed, I was already half-blinded when I stepped into the tower. The wall, by the touch, was of fine hewn stone; the steps, too, though somewhat steep and narrow, were of polished mason work, and regular and solid under foot. As I advanced, it seemed to me the stair grew airier and a thought more lightsome; and I was wondering what might be the cause of this change, a second blink of the summer lightning came and went. If I did not cry out, it was because fear had me by the throat; and if I did not fall, it was more by Heaven's mercy than by my own strength. It was not only that the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall, so that I seemed to be clambering aloft upon an open scaffold, but the same passing brightness showed me the steps were of unequal length, and that one of my feet rested that moment within two inches of the well. As slowly as a snail, feeling before me every inch, and testing the solidity of every stone, I continued to ascend the stair.

I had come close to one of these turns, when, feeling

forward, as usual, my hand slipped upon the edge and found nothing but emptiness beyond it. The stair had been carried no higher; to set a stranger mounting it in darkness was to send him straight to his death!

When I eventually climbed down and re-entered the kitchen, I stepped forward, came close behind where my uncle sat, and suddenly clapping my two hands down upon his shoulders—"Ah!" cried I. My uncle gave a kind of broken cry like a sheep's bleat, flung up his arms, and tumbled to the floor like a dead man. The keys were hanging in the cupboard; and it was my design to furnish myself with arms before my uncle should come again to his senses and the power of devising evil. In the cupboard were a few bottles, some apparently of medicine, a great many bills and other papers, which I would willingly enough have rummaged, had I had the time; and a few necessaries, that were nothing to my purpose. Thence I turned to the chests. The first was full of meal; the second of moneybags and papers tied into sheaves; in the third, with many other things (and these for the most part of clothes), I found a rusty, ugly-looking Highland dirk without the scabbard.

My uncle lay like a man dead all that night, and in the morning, when he awoke, he showed his fear of me, trying to explain that his request had been but a joke. His manner was quite changed, and he invited me to go with him to meet Captain Hoseason, in whose ship, the *Covenant*, my uncle had an interest. It was a long walk, but eventually we arrived at a dockside inn where I had to wait outside while my uncle had a long talk with the captain. Then the latter came towards me that we might make the better friends. "Sir," said he, "Mr. Balfour tells me great things of you; and for my part, I like your looks. I wish I was for longer here, but we'll make the most of what we have. Ye shall come on board my brig for half-an-hour, till the ebb sets, and drink a bowl with me." And then, passing his arm through mine, he set off towards his boat. "But come, what can I bring you from the Carolinas?" he asked. "Any friend of Mr. Balfour's can command. A roll of tobacco? Indian featherwork? a skin of a wild beast? a stone pipe? the mocking-bird that is as red as blood?—take your pick and say your pleasure."

By this time we were at the boatside, and he was handing me in. I did not dream of hanging back; I thought (the poor fool) that I had found a good friend and helper, and I was rejoiced to see the ship. As soon as we were all set in our places, the boat was thrust off from the pier and began to move over the waters; and what with my pleasure in this new movement and my surprise at our low position, and the appearance of the shores, and the growing bigness of the brig as we drew near to it, I could hardly understand what the captain said, and must have answered him at random.

As soon as we were alongside (where I sat fairly gaping at the ship's height, the strong humming of the tide against its sides, and the pleasant cries of the seamen at their work) Hoseason, declaring that he and I must be the first aboard, ordered a tackle to be sent down from the main-yard. In this I was whipped into the air and set down again on the deck, where the captain stood ready waiting for me, and instantly slipped back his arm under mine. There I stood some while, a little dizzy with the unsteadiness of all around me, perhaps a little afraid, and yet vastly pleased with these strange sights; the captain meanwhile pointing out the strangest, and telling me their names and uses. Then a thunderbolt seemed to strike me; I saw a great flash of fire, and fell senseless.

I came to myself in darkness, in great pain, bound hand and foot, and deafened by many unfamiliar noises. The whole world now heaved giddily up, and now rushed giddily downward; and so sick and hurt was I in body, and my mind so confounded, that it took me a long while, chasing my thoughts up and down, and ever stunned again by a fresh stab of pain, to realise that I must be lying somewhere bound in the belly of that unlucky ship, and that the wind must have strengthened to a gale.

I had no measure of time; day and night were alike in that ill-smelling cavern of the ship's bowels where I lay; and the misery of my situation drew out the hours to double. But sleep at length stole from the consciousness of sorrow. I was wakened by a light of a hand-lantern shining in my face. A small man of about thirty, with green eyes and a tangle of fair hair, stood looking down at me.

"Well," said he, "how goes it?"

I answered by a sob; and my visitor then felt my pulse and temples, and set himself to wash and dress the wound upon my scalp. He gave me some brandy and water in a tin pannikin, and left me once more to myself.

The next time he came to see me, I was lying between sleep and waking, my eyes wide open in the darkness, the sickness quite departed, but succeeded by a horrid giddiness and swimming that was almost worse to bear.

The glimmer of the lantern, as a trap opened, shone in like the Heaven's sunlight; and though it only showed me the strong, dark beams of the ship that was my prison, I could have cried aloud for gladness. The man with the green eyes was the first to descend the ladder, and I noticed that he came somewhat unsteady. He was followed by the captain. Neither said a word; but the first set to examine me, and dressed my wound as before, while Hoseason looked me in the face with an odd, black look.

"Now, sir, you see for yourself," said the first; "a high fever, no appetite, no light, no meat; you see for yourself what that means."

"I am no conjurer, Mr. Riach," said the captain.

"Give me leave, sir," said Riach; "you've a good head upon your shoulders, and a good Scotch tongue to ask with; but I will leave you no manner of excuse; I want that boy taken out of this hole and put in the fore-castle."

"What ye may want, sir, is a matter of concern to nobody but yoursell," returned the captain; "but I can tell ye that which is to be. Here he is; here he shall bide."

Mr. Riach caught him by the sleeve.

"Admitting that you have been paid to do a murder——" he began.

Hoseason turned upon him with a flash.

"Mr. Riach, I have sailed with ye three cruises," replied the captain. "In all that time, sir, ye should have learned to know me; I'm a stiff man, and a dour man; but for what ye say the now—fie, fie!—it comes from a bad heart and a black conscience. If ye say the lad will die——"

"Ay, will he!" said Mr. Riach.

"Well, sir, is not that enough?" said Hoseason. "Flit him where ye please!"

Five minutes afterwards my bonds were cut, I was hoisted on a man's back, carried up to the forecastle, and laid in a bunk on some sea-blankets. The day being calm and the wind fair, the scuttle was open, and not only the good sunlight shone in, and dazzled and delighted me, but from time to time (as the ship rolled) a dusty beam of sunlight shone in. I had no sooner moved, moreover, than one of the men brought me a drink of something healing which Mr. Riach had prepared, and bade me lie still and I should soon be well again.

Here I lay for the space of many days a close prisoner, and got my health again. The ship was bound for the Carolinas; and you must not suppose that I was going to that place merely as an exile. In those days of my youth, white men were still sold into slavery on the plantations, and that was the destiny to which my wicked uncle had condemned me.

The cabin boy Ransome came in at times from the round-house, where he berthed and served, now nursing a bruised limb in silent agony, now raving against the cruelty of Mr. Shuan. It made my heart bleed; but the men had a great respect for the chief mate, who was, as they said, "the only seaman of the whole jing-bang, and none such a bad man when he was sober." Indeed, I found there was a strange peculiarity about our two mates: that Mr. Riach was sullen, unkind, and harsh when he was sober, and Mr. Shuan would not hurt a fly except when he was drinking. I asked about the captain; but I was told drink made no difference upon that man of iron.

All this time, the Covenant was meeting continual head-winds and tumbling up and down against head-seas, so that the scuttle was almost constantly shut, and the forecastle lighted only by a swinging lantern on a beam. There was constant labour for all hands; the sails had to be made and shortened every hour; the strain told on the men's temper; there was a growl of quarrelling all day long from berth to berth; and as I was never allowed to set my foot on deck, you can picture to yourselves how weary of my life I grew to be.

One night, about eleven o'clock, a man of Mr. Riach's watch came below for his jacket; and instantly there began to go a whisper about the forecastle that "Shuan had done for him at last," but we had scarce time to get the idea rightly in our heads when Captain Hoscason came down the ladder.

He looked sharply round the bunks in the tossing light of the lantern; and then he addressed me, to my surprise, in tones of kindness.

"My man," said he, "we want ye to serve in the round-house. You and Ransome are to change berths. Run away aft with ye." Even as he spoke, two seamen appeared in the scuttle, carrying Ransome in their arms. The light fell direct on the boy's face. It was as white as wax, and had a look upon it like a dreadful smile.

"Run away aft; run away aft with ye!" cried Hoseason.

In the course of the next day I had got well into the run of my duties. I had to serve at the meals; all the day through I would be running with a dram to one or the other of my three masters. And yet in other ways it was an easy service. There was no cloth to lay; the meals were either of oatmeal porridge or salt junk, except twice a week, when there was duff; and though I was clumsy enough and (not being firm on my sea-legs) sometimes fell with what I was bringing them, both Mr. Riach and the captain were singularly patient. I could not but fancy they were making up lee-way with their consciences, and that they would scarce have been so good with me if they had not been worse with Ransome.

As for Mr. Shuarf, the drink, or his murder of the boy, who had soon died, or the two together, had certainly troubled his mind. I cannot say I ever saw him in his proper wits.

More than a week went by, in which the ill-luck that had hitherto pursued the *Covenant* upon this voyage grew yet more strongly marked. Some days she made a little way; others, she was driven actually back. The tenth afternoon there was a falling swell and a thick, wet, white fog that hid one end of the brig from the other. All afternoon, when I went on deck, I saw men and officers listening hard over the bulwarks. Maybe about ten at night, I was serving Mr. Riach and the captain at their supper, when the ship struck something with a great sound, and we heard voices singing out. My two masters leaped to their feet.

"She's struck!" said Mr. Riach.

"No, sir," said the captain. "We've only run a boat down."

The captain was on the right of it. We had run down a boat in the fog, and she parted in the midst and gone to the bottom

with all her crew but one. This man had been sitting in the stern as a passenger, while the rest were on the benches rowing. At the moment of the blow, the stern had been thrown into the air, and the man had leaped up and caught hold of the brig's bowsprit. It showed he had luck and much agility that he should have thus saved himself from such a pass.

He was smallish in stature, his face was sunburnt, and his eyes were unusually light and had a kind of dancing madness in them that was both engaging and alarming.

He soon introduced himself with an air of bravado. "I am one of those honest gentlemen who were in trouble about the years '45 and '46," he explained. "If I got into the hands of any of the red-coated gentry it would go hard with me. I was for France, and there was a ship bound for that country cruising in wait when you ran me down."

He fingered his money bag at his belt as he added, "I have that upon me which will reward you highly if ye can set me ashore where I was going, for as a Jacobite I durst not return to Scotland."

At that period there were many exiled gentlemen coming back to Scotland at the peril of their lives, either to see their friends or to collect a little money. All this I had, of course, heard tell of; and now I had a man under my eyes whose life was forfeit, for he was not only a rebel and a smuggler of rents, but had taken service with King Louis of France. As events were soon to prove he had been foolish to say that in his possession was much money, for I saw that Hoseason, while inviting the stranger to go with me and have some food, had a cunning look on his face.

"So you're a Jacobite?" asked I, as I set meat before him.

"Aye," said he, beginning to eat. "And you, by your long face, should be a Whig?"

"Betwixt and between," said I, not wishing to annoy him.

I looked out of the cabin door and saw that the captain was conferring with his men. With horror I saw that they all had drawn cutlasses in their hands.

"Do you want to be killed?" said I.

My companion sprang to his feet. "They haven't got me yet," he said "Will ye stand by me?"

"That I will," I replied. "I am no thief, nor yet murderer. I'll stand by you!"

"Why then," said he, "what's your name?"

"David Balfour," I answered.

"My name is Stewart," he said, drawing himself up, "Alan Breck, they call me." And without more ado, he harried me pistols from the cupboard and told me fill and prime them, at the same time drawing his own sword. It was not a moment too soon, for Hoseason and his crew were coming towards us. When they saw that Alan had his sword ready they drew back and conferred, but within two minutes they rushed us from all sides. Though outnumbered, we had the advantage of a strong cabin, and while Alan guarded the door I watched the windows. They came at us with a rush, and what with the smoke of the pistols, the screams and grunts of wounded men I could scarce understand how the battle went, but I saw Shuan lying dead at Alan's feet, while outside were several wounded men. Soon they beat a hasty retreat.

They tried again a little later, but in vain. We were safe behind the heavy oak timbers, while they had no place to hide as they approached. It was not long before they had had enough, and with their comrades dragging their wounded they dashed out of sight. We kept watch turn and turn about all that night, and there was no sound; indeed, at the first light of dawn we could see that the vessel was drifting with no helmsman. It was a mercy that the wind was light and the sea smooth.

Before the sun was high in the sky the captain came to parley. "Ye've made a sore hash of my brig!" he said; "I haven't hands enough to work her, and my first officer has got your sword through his vitals. There is nothing left me, sir, but to put back to Glasgow for a new crew."

"It was of your choosing," said Alan. "Fifteen tarry sailors on the one side, and a man and a halfling boy on the other. Man, it's pitiful!" he exclaimed. "But Glasgow will no' do for me. You must put me ashore in France as I asked."

"I have not the crew to do it, sir. This coast is dangerous, and with my first officer dead there is none acquainted with it."

Alan considered this for a time. "I see your difficulty," he said. "Then you may set me down in Appin, or Morar;

where ye please within thirty miles of my own country, except in a country of the Campbells."

We were, by this time, to the east of the Isle of Canna and sailing down towards Tiree. It was a rocky, dangerous sea, and towards evening the wind freshened and the sea became rougher. By nightfall the weather had risen to a storm, and the captain had to admit that he did not know where he was, having no charts or help. He thought that we were nearing the Island of Mull and was worried about the reefs. He had reason, for from the tossing deck we saw the white spray too late, and the ship crashed on the rocks with such a grinding shock that it threw us all flat on the deck. The waves broke clean over us, and all was upheaval. Some of the crew went below to bring their wounded companions up; others, with Alan and myself, tried to launch the skiff. I remember hearing a shout "For God's sake, hold on!" as a great mass of water crashed down on me; my fingers were torn from their grasp on the boat and I was hurled into the sea.

They say a drowning man goes down only three times. I do not know how often I sank that terrible night and came up again, buffeted hither and thither. Presently I found I was holding on to a spar, and the current carried me I cared not where. Then all of a sudden I was in quiet water, and began to come to myself. I turned and saw that the brig still stood above the water, but in the pale occasional moonlight I could not see if any life remained aboard her, and every moment I was being carried farther away. A wave threw me on the shore, and I got up, shivering with cold and terribly bruised. But it was dry land, and I was safe.

I kept walking all that night up and down the shore, because I knew I dared not lie down to rest. At dawn I climbed to the top of a rugged hill. What I could see of the island had no home nor sign of man; nor was there any sign of the ship. Hungry and ill, I went to the shore again and walked right round the island. I picked up shellfish to eat and was violently sick as a result. I found that the isle was cut off from the mainland by only a small creek, but when I tried to cross it I found it was very deep, and being unable to swim it might as well have been as wide as the Atlantic. I walked back to the place where I had been cast ashore in the hopes of finding the

spar so that I could float across on it, but the sea had carried this hope away. I was wrecked and alone, yet on the horizon I could see smoke curling from houses on the mainland. At last, wearied beyond caring, I found shelter behind some boulders and slept.

The next day I saw a fishing boat on the sea. I called and waved, but the two men in it took little notice. In a frenzy of despair I ran along the coast after it, and then I stopped in wonder. The creek I had tried to cross had disappeared! Only a trickle of water remained. A sea-bred boy would not have remained half a day on the island, which was only what they would call a tidal islet.

I have seen wicked men and fools; a great many of both. I believe they both get paid in the end; but the fools first.

The Ross of Mull, which I had now got upon, was rugged and trackless, being all bog, brier, and big stone. I aimed as well as I could for the smoke I had seen from my island, and so came to a house in the bottom of a little hollow about five o'clock that evening. An old man sat smoking his pipe in the sun.

With what little English he had (for like most of the people in those parts his language was Gaelic) he gave me to understand that my shipmates had got safe ashore and had eaten at his house the day before.

"Was there one," I asked, "dressed like a gentleman?"

He said that to be sure the first of them, the one that came alone, wore breeches and stockings. Then he added that I must be the young lad the gentleman had spoken about.

"Yes!" I said.

"Well then," said the old man "I have a word for you. You are to follow your friend to his country, by Torosay." He then asked me my story, which I told him, and his good woman set oat bread before me and a brew of punch from the country spirit, which threw me into a sweat, and a deep slumber, so that it was near noon the next day when I took the road.

As I walked along I met many people, who seemed in great poverty, and when I asked the way, saying Torosay over and over again, instead of pointing the direction they mumbled in Gaelic which I could not understand. I wandered many

miles, and at last came to a house where, when I said I would pay five shillings for a night's rest, the man who stood at the door agreed to give me shelter and put me on the road to Torosay the next morning.

I learned later that five shillings was a fortune to these people, as indeed it was to me, for I had lost most of my money when thrown into the water, and had but three sovereigns to my name. My host was an artful fellow, and when we set out in the morning he took me not more than two miles before asking for more money to show me the way, and finally I left him, determined to get away before he should attack me, for I saw a dagger under his shabby coat.

While I was on the ship with Alan he had given me a silver button from his coat as a souvenir of our friendship, and it was not long before I found that this was to help me much on my journey. It took me some days to reach the other side of the Island of Mull, fifty miles as the crow flies, and then it was necessary to board a ferry for the mainland. It was there that I found a skipper whose name was Neil Roy Macrob, and since Macrob was one of Alan's kinsmen, I thought he might have news for me. At first he was suspicious of me, but when I showed the button he instantly told me that I was to lie the night at an inn, and the third day after to ask my way to the house of James of the Glens, at Aucharn in the Duror of Appin. He gave me details of the road and houses where I might get food and rest on the way. He also told me to avoid the English soldiers, to avoid Whigs and Campbells, and in brief to conduct myself like a Jacobite agent which he no doubt thought me.

My journey was not too difficult, and on the second day a little after I had started the sun shone upon a moving clump of scarlet in the distance. Every now and then there were flashes of sun on bright steel. They were English soldiers, probably from Fort William. After some time, at a bend in the road four travellers came into view. The road was narrow and they came singly, leading their horses by the reins. The first was a great, red-headed man; the second, by his decent black garb and white wig, I guessed to be a lawyer, the third was a servant, while the fourth I recognised in the uniform of a sheriff's officer. When they came up to me I made so bold as to ask the way to Aucharn.

"And what seek ye in Aucharn?" the big man asked.

"The man that lives there," said I.

"James of the Glens," he said musingly. And then to the lawyer: "Is he gathering the people, do you think?"

"I do not know, Master Campbell," said the man of law, "but we shall do better to bide till the soldiers come up."

"If you are concerned for me," I said "I am no Jacobite, but an honest subject of King George, owing no man and fearing none."

"Well said," replied Campbell, "but if I may make so bold to ask, what does an honest man want with James of the Glens? I have power here, I must tell you. I am King's Factor and have soldiers at my back."

As he spoke there came the sound of a firelock from high up on the hill, and the man fell in the road. "I am killed!" he said several times over. He tried to open his clothes, but his fingers slipped on the buttons; his head rolled on his shoulders and he passed away.

The lawyer knelt beside his master, as did the servant, and the sheriff turned to hasten up the soldiers. I had glimpsed a man in a black coat on the hill and began running towards him.

"There he is!" I cried. "The murderer!"

At that the man began to run. The next moment he was lost in the fringe of the wood, and I ran after him. Suddenly a voice called on me to halt.

"Ten pounds if you take that lad," shouted the lawyer to the soldiers who had come up at a run. "He's an accomplice. He was posted here to hold us in talk."

At those words I knew a feeling of great terror. I stood transfixed with horror.

"Come in among the trees," whispered a voice from a nearby bush.

• I scarce knew what I was doing but obeyed, and as I did so I heard the firelocks crack and the balls whistle in the trees. Just inside the shelter of the wood I found Alan Breck standing with a fishing rod. He gave no salutation; indeed, there was no time for civilities; only "Come!" said he, and set off running as fast as he could; I, like a sheep, following him. The pace was terrible: my heart seemed bursting against my

ribs. A quarter of an hour later, Alan stopped, clapped down flat in the heather, and turned to me.

"Now," gasped he. "Do as I do for your life."

At the same speed, with much more caution, we traced back again across the wooded mountain by the same way we had come, only perhaps higher; till we threw ourselves panting like dogs in bracken only a little way from where I had first found him.

All was quiet, and we both revived. Then I said: "Alan, what is the sense of this? Your ways of living are not mine. Ye ken well that yon Campbell man lies murdered on the road."

Alan looked at me, and said: "If I were going to kill a gentleman, it would not be in my own country, to bring trouble on my clan; and I would not go wanting sword and gun, with a fishing rod on my back. I swear I had neither art, part, nor act in it."

"I thank God for that," I replied, and offered him my hand.

"Do you know the man who did it?" I asked. "The man in the black coat?"

"It's a great fuss about the death of a Campbell," said Alan evasively. "He was near me, but it is strange: when he passed I was tying my brogues, and anyway, I've a great memory for forgetting!"

When it came to this I gave up. "It's not good Christianity as I understand it, but it's good enough. And here I offer you my hand for a second time."

As he clasped it, he grew serious. "We must both flee," he observed. "The whole of Appin will be searched for me because I am a deserter; and for you, because you are involved in a murder."

I asked him where we should flee.

"To the Lowlands," said he. "It'll be no small journey. Ye maun lie bare and hard, and brook many an empty belly. But you must choose; either take to the heather with me—or hang!"

I peeped over the fronds of bracken. Far below us were the red dots of the searching soldiers going farther away. Soon afterwards, we made our way stealthily along the mountain-side towards Aucharn. We kept on after night fell, and about half past ten we came to the top of a brae and saw lights

below us. Alan whistled in a peculiar manner; having thus set folks' minds at rest we made our way to the farm, for such it was, to be met by a handsome man of about fifty to whom I was introduced. This was James of the Glens. He was very troubled by news of the murder, for he knew that it meant trouble for his people. Alan, perceiving the worry that our presence gave his kinsman, and after a little food and refreshment, we set out eastwards, in a fine, mild, dark night over much the same broken country as before.

Sometimes we walked, and sometimes we ran, and as it drew on to morning, walked ever the less and ran the more. For all our hurry, day began to come while we were still far from any shelter. It found us in a prodigious valley where the mountain sides were steep. I have sometimes thought since then it was the Pass of Glencoe, where the massacre was in the time of King William.

"This is no fit place for you and me," said Alan. "This is a place they're bound to watch." And with that he ran harder than ever to a part where a river was split in two among three rocks. We jumped the foaming water and clambered to the top of one of the great boulders which had a shallow cavity in it. It seemed fairly safe and, exhausted, we both lay down to sleep.

I dare say it would be about nine in the morning when Alan awakened me, his hand pressed on my mouth. He signed to me to peer over the edge of the rock.

About half a mile away was a camp of red-coats, and all along the glen were posted sentries. Higher up the pass were posted cavalrymen, whom we could see in the distance riding to and fro. I took but one look at them and ducked again into my place.

"It was what I was afraid of," explained Alan. "We're in a narrow place. If they get up the sides of the mountain they could spy us with a glass; but if they'll keep in the foot of the valley, we'll do yet. The posts are thinner down the water; and, come night, we'll try our hand at getting by them."

"And what are we to do till night?" I asked.

"Lie here," he said.

It was a terrible time. The sun blistered us. We had no water; only a bottle of brandy that James of the Glens had

given us. The rock became too hot to touch, and the hours crept by. The soldiers kept stirring in the valley, now changing guard, now hunting in parties among the rocks. Sometimes they were so close below us that we could hear their voices.

By the afternoon the rock was unbearable. "As well one death as another," muttered Alan as he slipped down on the ground on the shadowy side of the rock. I followed him at once, instantly falling my length, so weak and giddy was I from the heat. Here, then, we lay for an hour or two, and lying quite naked to the eye of any soldier who should have strolled that way. None came however; all passing by on the other side.

Presently our strength returned, and perceiving that the soldiers were somewhat sleepy from the sultriness of the day and satisfied that they had searched well, we began to slip from rock to rock, now crawling flat on our bellies, now making a run for it, heart in mouth. By sundown we had made some distance upwards, so that when night came, with lowering clouds, we were safely hidden from view.

We slept at midnight in a cave high in the mountains, and in the morning Alan adjudged it wiser that we should hide there for some days. We had a bag of meal with us and were able to catch fish which teemed in the burns. Alan knew the country well, for it was part of his estates, and he went by himself one night to a small village where he found a man to collect money from his friends and bring it to us. It was three days coming, and with it there was news that the whole countryside was alive with soldiers. He brought us one of the bills which had been circulated by the soldiery, and I read with curiosity the description of myself; "A tall strong lad of about eighteen, wearing an old bluecoat, very ragged, an old Highland bonnet, a long homespun waistcoat, blue breeches, his legs bare, low country shoes, wanting the toes; speaks like a lowlander; has no beard." It was a good enough description.

It was certain that we could not stay forever where we were, and the next morning, being misty, we started on eleven hours of incessant, hard travelling which brought us to the end of the range of mountains. We lay down in a hovel of the hillside and held a council of war.

"David," said Alan, "this is how we stand. Appin means capture and death to us; to the South it's all Campbells, and no' to be thought of. To the North: well, there's no sense in going North—neither for you who wants to get to Queensferry and your uncle; nor yet for me, that wants to get to France. Well, then, we can strike East."

"East be it!" says I quite cheerily.

"Well, east be it," said Alan. "Once there we have the moors. Let the red-coats come over the hills and they can spy you miles away in that flat, bald country. But we must take the risk."

We started without more ado. We crept over mile after mile of moor, with only birds to see among the heather. Sometimes we rested and one slept; we had several days of this; our food had gone, and we had to depend on brackish pools for water when the little we could carry in the brandy bottle had been drunk; but never a soldier did we see, for we were by now out of the Appin country.

On two or three occasions we made into the surrounding hills, where Alan knew Jacobites to be hiding out, and people ready to help fugitives from the red-coats with food and shelter. But most of the time we dared not go where tracks and roads might have soldiers to waylay us, and so we slept under the cold night sky and staggered under blistering sun by day, half crouching in the heather and always turning to see if eyes were watching us.

At last the life told on me, and I had to tell Alan I could go no farther. He was for carrying me, for he himself seemed to have the strength of a lion, but I knew that even he could not manage this for far, and I begged him to go on alone. He would not leave me, and made up his mind to take the risk of knocking at the door of the first house we came to, and asking for help. What danger this was I knew as well as he, for with great rewards on our heads greed might sway anyone, quite apart from dislike of Jacobites which was general in that part of the land where the Lowlands border on the Highlands.

Chance served us very well, for it was a household of the Maclarens that we found, where Alan was not only welcome for his name's sake, but known by reputation.

Here then I was got to bed without delay, a doctor fetched.

He found me in a sorry plight, but whether he was a very good doctor, or I was a very young strong man, before a month was passed I was able to make the road again with good heart. All this time Alan would not leave me, though I pressed him, and indeed his foolhardiness in staying was the subject of outcry among two or three friends who were let into the secret of our presence. For safety's sake he hid in the braes during the day, returning at night to see me and obtain food. The soldiers let us be, though once a company of dragoons passed down the road, and I saw them march by from my bedroom window.

When I was well again the month was already far through August, and still beautiful warm weather. In Alan's view the hunt must surely have slackened, and probably the military thought we had got away by some ship to France, as most of the clansmen with a price on their heads succeeded in doing.

"It's a principle in military affairs," said he, "to go where ye are least expected. The Forth is our chief trouble. Well, if we seek to creep round the head of that river and come down by Kippen or Balfron, it's just precisely there that they'll be looking to lay hands on us. But if we go straight to the bridge at Stirling, I'll lay my sword that they'll let us pass unchallenged."

It took us two days and two nights to reach the head of Allan Water, and that night we followed it down, coming to the edge of the hills where we saw the moon shining on the town and Castle of Stirling, with the wide waters of the Forth beyond it. We found a little sandy islet and hid there all day, listening to the sound of reaping in the corn fields. As soon as the shearers quit their work and the dusk began to fall, we waded ashore and struck for the Bridge of Stirling, keeping to the fields and along the hedges.

"It was late when we reached the approach to the bridge and all seemed quiet and deserted. We could see no sign of a sentry. Presently an old peasant woman came along the road and we listened to her footsteps as she crossed the bridge. Just as we thought she must have passed over there came the ringing challenge of a sentry!

"This'll never do for us, David," said Alan, and we made our way hurriedly along the edge of the water, away from the bridge. I did not know what Alan had in mind, for I could not

see how we could possibly cross the water. However, he was a man of resource as I presently realised. A mile or so up the river he pointed to some boats tied to a jetty, and so with muffled oars we crossed to the other side.

The plan we made, now we had reached safety, was that Alan should fend for himself while I looked for Mr. Rankeillor, a writer, who had charge of my family's affairs in Queensferry. At night I would come to a hiding place we had selected and tell him how I had progressed.

As I walked down the streets among townsfolk neatly dressed I suddenly realised how shabby I was, and for the life of me I could not pluck up courage to address them. I walked up and down for hours, and at last, weary, sat by the quayside.

I must have looked such a sorry sight that a ruddy-faced, kindly, consequential man came up to me and asked me what I did.

I told him I was come to Queensferry on business, and taking heart from his sympathetic interest, asked him to direct me to the house of Mr. Rankeillor.

"Why!" says he, "by a rather singular chance, I am that very man."

"Then, sir," said I, "I have to beg the favour of an interview. I am David Balfour."

He looked at me doubtfully, and led me back to his house, where he took me into a dusty chamber full of books. "And now," says he, "if you have any business, pray be brief and come to the point."

"I believe, sir, that I have some rights in the estate of Shaws."

He took some papers from a drawer and set them before him.

"Well?" he asked.

But I had shot my bolt and sat speechless.

"Come, come," he said testily. "You must continue. Where were you born?"

"In Essendean, sir," said I, "the year 1733, the 12th of March."

"Your father and mother?"

I told him all I knew about them, and then after many other searching questions he seemed satisfied that I really was who I claimed to be. He then asked me to tell him of my adventures, which I did.

"On the very day of your disappearance," he said, "Mr. Campbell walked into my office. I had never heard of your existence. I had known your father, but after enquiries I feared the worst. Mr. Ebenezer admitted having seen you; declared that he had given you considerable sums; and that you had started for the Continent of Europe, intending to complete your education."

We had much pleasant conversation, and then he led me to a bedroom in an upper part of the house, where he gave me soap and water; and a suit belonging to his son. I made what change I could to my appearance, and David Balfour came to life again. Then I went downstairs again.

Mr. Rankeillor caught me on the stairs, and had me into his office once more. "Sit ye down, David," he invited. "You will be wondering, no doubt, about your father and uncle. It is a singular tale—a romantic one. Briefly it is that both fell in love with the same lady, and as she seemed to like both equally well, they made a foolish bargain: one to take the lady as his wife and the other to have the estate. The upshot was that one—your father—became a poor man; the other—your uncle—a miser. And you, as son of the heir of the family by all the traditions and rights of Scotsmen, lost your heritage."

"Well, sir," I asked, "what in all this is my position?"

"The estate is yours beyond a doubt," replied the lawyer. "It matters nothing what your father signed, you are the heir of entail. But your uncle is an obstinate man and will fight in the courts. With your adventures giving your name notoriety and your friendship with a certain person whose name I, as a man of law, did not properly hear (and I beg you not to mention it to me again), would go ill if it came out. My advice is to make an easy bargain with your uncle, perhaps even leaving him at Shaws, and contenting yourself with fair provision."

I left him drafting an agreement and hurried away to see Alan. I told him of all that had happened, and that very soon

I would be able to help him with money for his journey to France.

The next evening the lawyer with his clerk and I set out for my uncle's house. He was terrified when he saw me, for the guilt of what he had done in arranging my kidnapping hung weightily on his conscience.

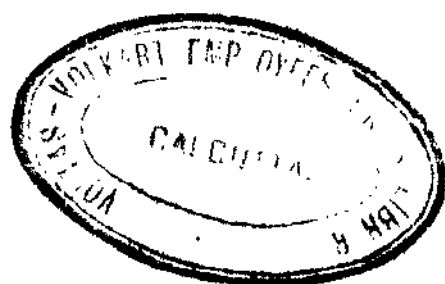
But he was my kin—and old. On the advice of Mr. Rankeillor I set my hand to an agreement by which my uncle paid me two-thirds of the yearly income of Shaws which would, of course, be mine again on his death. That same evening money was credited to me at the bank so that I could help my friend whose name, now that I was a man of property, I could not mention.

The good Mr. Rankeillor gave me the address of a lawyer who was a Stewart and could be relied on to find a ship for Alan's safe embarkation within a day or two; and this I arranged without delay. So ended my adventure, and when I bade farewell to Alan we tried to joke about his wild appearance and my new clothes and estate, but you could feel very well that we were nearer tears than laughter.

"Goodbye," said Alan, and held out his hand.

"Goodbye," said I, and gave his hand a little grasp, before I turned and went off down the hill.

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